



Campello Gramelius, Misha (2026) *Literary entanglement: the collapse of power dynamics in subversive translations and source texts*. PhD thesis.

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/85848/>

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk

**Literary Entanglement: The Collapse of Power Dynamics in Subversive
Translations and Source Texts**

By Misha Campello Gramelius

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of

PhD Candidate in Modern Languages and Cultures

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

College of Arts and Humanities

University of Glasgow

Submitted in September 2025

Abstract

This thesis investigates how literature and its translation negotiate marginalised subjectivities by examining the intersections of identity and power across three case studies: Clarice Lispector's *A Hora da Estrela* and its translations into English *The Hour of the Star* by Giovanni Pontiero (UK) first and Benjamin Moser (US) later; Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* and its translation into Catalan, *Com Ser-ho Alhora* by Maria Dolors Udina i Abelló; and Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's *La Virgen Cabeza* and its US English *Slum Virgin* by Frances Riddle. The project poses the question: How these novels and their translations explore issues of identity and power dynamics through a contemporary feminist lens?

Working within Feminist and Queer Translation Studies, the project combines literary textual analysis with comparative analysis, through queer and feminist frameworks. It foregrounds translation as a site of cultural negotiation affected by market expectations and the active agents' positionalities, all shaping the representation of marginalised ontologies in the text. By examining both source and translated texts, the study highlights how translational effects expand, sustain, attenuate, and reconfigure the subversive strategies of the source texts.

The findings reveal significant divergences in translational practice. Pontiero and Moser, while differing in approach, both feminise Lispector's protagonist and weaken aspects of her radical subversion to different degrees; Abelló's translation of Smith sustains and amplifies the novel's destabilising effects, particularly through complex handling of grammatical gender; and Riddle's *Slum Virgin* both amplifies the disruptive characteristics of Cabezón Cámara's novel and reveals marked inconsistencies, demonstrating racial sensitivity but a limited engagement with queer specificity. These case studies illustrate how translations intervene in the politics of representation, reshaping the subversive potential of feminist and queer writing across cultural contexts.

Ultimately, the project demonstrates that translation is a critical practice deeply implicated in the negotiation of identity and power. The ethical stakes of translational strategies and their role in mediating feminist and queer resistance across linguistic and cultural borders is central to the discussion, and it leads to an advocacy for translation

practices that are dynamic, inclusive, and attuned to marginalised voices, positioning translation as a tool for social justice.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Table of Contents.....	4
List of Figures.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	7
Literary Entanglement: The Collapse of Power Dynamics in Subversive Translations and Source Texts	8
1.1 Introduction: The Invisible Negotiation	9
1.2 Bones Exposed: Research Questions.....	18
1.3 Methodology: An Operating System.....	21
1.4 Structural Overview	27
2. Literature Review: Feminist and Queer Translation Studies	30
3. <i>A Hora da Estrela/The Hour of the Star</i>	53
3.1 Clarice Lispector, Giovanni Pontiero, and Benjamin Moser, on the authors and (re)translation.....	54
3.2 <i>A Hora da Estrela</i> and <i>The Hour of the Star</i> : A Comparative Analysis	64
Paratexts: Looking Around	65
The Narrator-Protagonist Dyad: Rodrigo's Ontology	75
Macabéa's Silence: An Inaccessible Ontology	86
Made With Words: The Ontology of the Narrative	90
Truncated Syntax and the Malleability of Meaning in Translation	98
The Body in Translation	105
The Masculine Lens in Translation.....	111
Giovanni Pontiero and Feminine Agency: A Struggle	120
4. <i>How to be both / Com Ser-ho Alhora</i>	125
4.1 Ali Smith, <i>How to be Both</i> , Maria Dolors Udina i Abelló, <i>Com Ser-ho Alhora</i>	126
4.2 <i>How to Be Both</i> and <i>Com Ser-Ho Alhora</i> : A Comparative Analysis	131
Narrative Voice: Authority Over the Narration/Self	136
Francescho: A Utilitarian Approach to Gender	148
Sexuality and Gender: Francescho and Barto.....	158
Francescho and George: Looking and Being Looked At.....	163
(De)mastering gender and other practices	178
Poetic Force: A Semiotic Encounter	183
5. <i>La Virgen Cabeza / Slum Virgin</i>	192
5.1 Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, <i>La Virgen Cabeza</i> , Frances Riddle, <i>Slum Virgin</i>	196
5.2 <i>La Virgen Cabeza</i> and <i>Slum Virgin</i> : A Comparative Analysis	202

Narrative Power-Dynamics.....	211
Mother and Family Units	222
The Use and Translation of the Word <i>Negros</i>	230
The Use and Translation of the Word <i>Travesti</i>	237
Queer: On Migration and Assimilation of Identity Labels	248
From Carlos Guillermo to Cleopatra and the trífecta of Susana, Perón, and the Virgin Mary	253
Transgender, Transexual, Transgression, Translation: To Trans*	260
6. Conclusions.....	267
On a personal note,	275
7. Bibliography	277

List of Figures

- Figure 1. Scan from Clarice Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 5 and 7. A list of titles, including the author's signature, on the side of the author's dedication.....66
- Figure 2. Scan from Clarice Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero (Manchester: Carcanet Pres, 1986), pp. 7-9. The Author's dedication and the list of titles, including the author's signature.67
- Figure 3. Scan from Lispector, Clarice, *The Hour of the Star*, trans. by Benjamin Moser (Penguin Books, 2014), pp. xiii-xv. It shows the order in which paratexts are presented, including the author's dedication, a list of titles, and a scan of the list of titles in Portuguese.67
- Figure 4. Clarice Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 78. Scan of the page to evidence the formatting of the section.82
- Figure 5. Scan from the illustration at the beginning of Francescho's section depicts two eyes as a sprig, taken from a fresco painting. It is taken from Smith, *How to Be Both*, p. 187. 165
- Figure 6 Francesco del Cossa, Santa Lucia, c.1473/1474. Tempera on poplar panel. A pale woman holding a palm frond in one hand and a disembodied pair of eyes branching from a stem in the other hand against a gold background. 166
- Figure 7. Drawing by Sarah Wood, printed in Ali Smith, *Hot to Be Both*, p. 1. A drawing of a surveillance camera. 168
- Figure 8. Ali Smith, *How to Be Both*, pp. 189-91. The scan of the book shows the spiralling formatting of the novel..... 184
- Figure 9. Dolors Udina i Abelló (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, pp. 149-51. The scan of the book shows the spiralling formatting of the novel..... 184
- Figure 10. Ali Smith, *How to Be Both*, pp. 370-72. The scan shows the spiralling formatting of the novel..... 188
- Figure 11. Dolors Udina i Abelló (translation). *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, pp. 282-4. The scan of the book shows the spiralling formatting of the novel..... 189

Acknowledgements

Findings from chapter 3 have been published in: Gramelius, Misha Campello, 'A Tradução Da Estrela: Exploring the Potential of Feminist Translation to Inform Research in Clarice Lispector's Novel', *Transcultural Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5.1 (2024), pp. 65–78, doi:[10.21608/tjhss.2024.255717.1226](https://doi.org/10.21608/tjhss.2024.255717.1226)

The author expresses gratitude to the FfWG, which provides grants, bursaries and fellowships to women graduates to help with living expenses.

Literary Entanglement: The Collapse of Power Dynamics in Subversive Translations and Source Texts

The title of this thesis is a wordplay aiming to capture the multiplicity and fluidity at the heart of this project. As will become evident, the project is, in many respects, two-fold: it blends literary analysis of the source texts with comparative analysis of the effects produced by both the source and the translated texts; it examines the power dynamics between narrator and narrated, between dominant and marginalised identities; and it treats approaches to commercial and artistic translations as equally significant. The title ‘Literary Entanglement’ (in reference to quantum entanglement) refers to the multiplicity of these literary texts, whose meanings, within this project, exist in an unattainable in-between. Source and translated texts become entangled in a system where neither exists independently; they are best understood through the effects they produce and through their relationship to one another. This is not to suggest that translations and source texts cannot exist independently outside this framework. Rather, within the scope of this thesis, they are *literally* entangled (interwoven through the analysis) as a way to subvert traditional hierarchies that position the translation as subordinate to the source. Instead, the source text is treated as one node in a dynamic system: a reference point that the translation may draw from or diverge from as an autonomous creation. This entanglement enables an exploration of how meaning is produced, replicated, and transformed, and how the translation, in turn, can retroactively inform the source text by offering a new linguistic and cultural lens.

Following the wordplay, the subtitle reads ‘The Collapse of Power Dynamics in Subversive Translations and Source Texts.’ ‘Collapse’ here carries a double meaning: as a verb, to fall down, and as a noun, the sudden failure of a system. This highlights the project’s focus on the subversive nature of the source texts, which depict, each in their own way, the disruption and dismantling of power dynamics: between narrator and narrated, and between dominant social expectations and the subversiveness of peripheral identities that are positioned as subordinate within hierarchical social systems. More specifically, the subtitle also gestures toward the concept of the wave function collapse in quantum mechanics. In such a system, multiple potential states exist in superposition until an interaction causes the system to collapse into a single, observable outcome. In this context, the collapse represents how a reader, engaging with either the source or translated text, reduces the multiplicity of

meanings and interpretations into one experiential reading, that of the observer. This act of reading brings forth a specific effect, unique to that interaction, which this project traces through each case study as a form of extended collapse, foregrounding perceived linguistic effects over fixed meanings.

1.1 Introduction: The Invisible Negotiation

Identity is an intricate concept, due to its quality as an ‘experience,’ it oftentimes escapes language, yet novels continuously attempt to capture it between their pages. These literary depictions are, at their centre, culturally and linguistic situated ideas of selfhood, and, when such texts are translated, these portrayals migrate to new cultural and linguistic spaces where they have the opportunity to operate differently. Some identities, bound to their cultural origins, remain difficult to map across languages, while others extend more fluidly, becoming even relatable, to readers in the target context. It is in this complex interplay between identity, narrative, and translation with a particular interest in marginalised and oppressed groups that this project is situated.

On a wider scale, the project’s importance lies in the prominence of daily cultural exchanges through translation, as they carry the potential for transnational influence as well as the subversion of societal power struggles across diverse cultural contexts. Within these exchanges, a relevant case takes place: if a novel within its context subverts dominant gendered power dynamics in society, it has the potential to do so in the target context, however, the cultural and linguistic specificity of the source text brings forth significant challenges and opportunities for the text. This is the case of the specific works selected for this project, which include Clarice Lispector’s *A Hora da Estrela* (1985, Brazil) and its translations into English, *The Hour of the Star* by Giovanni Pontiero (1997, UK) and Benjamin Moser’s (2011, US); Ali Smith’s *How to Be Both* (2014, UK) and its Catalan translation by Dolors Udina i Abelló, *Com Ser-ho Alhora* (2015, Catalonia); and Gabriela Cabezón Cámara’s *La Virgen Cabeza* (2009, Argentina) and its English translation *Slum Virgin* by Frances Riddle (2017, US). The reason for this selection will be observed in further detail later in this chapter, as it pertains to the design of research projects within Feminist Translation Studies. The central aim is to analyse how these novels and translations explore

identity-representation and its intersectionality with explicit narrative power dynamics or, in a broader sense, the process of subjectification of the characters alongside their agency and dominance over the narrative power dynamics through feminist and queer lenses.

Within the scholarly sphere, the research project moves across several interconnected fields including linguistics, cultural studies, gender studies, sociology, and literary criticism. Through this intersectional approach, it explores how linguistic formulations are shaped by, and in turn shape, cultural dimensions, contributing to the production and reinforcement of power dynamics within society. This is enacted through the narratives under analysis, often marked by struggle, which construct various hierarchies and social orders that are challenged and subverted, opening the possibility for shifts in perception and allowing space for a direct critique of dominant power dynamics in different societies, all examined in detail in the central chapters of the thesis. The identity groups explored in this research are, similarly to the multiplicity of disciplines, diverse in their composition. However, they share a focus on oppression or marginalisation, whether on an individual, institutional, or societal level and reveal the intersectional nature of abjection. The relevance of this intersectional approach has been highlighted by scholars, initially centring the conversation on the struggles of women of colour, and how their different intersectional characteristics affect the forms of violence to which they are subjected in society, as for example explained by Patricia Hill Collins in *Black Feminist Thought* (1990) and Kimberlé Crenshaw in *Mapping the Margins* (1991).¹ This complex approach to intersectional struggles is central to the thesis, precisely because the characters' experiences of struggle differ across the works. Rather than presenting a consistent pattern, they offer a spectrum of intersectionality, which ranges from a power dynamic centred on a woman living in poverty and from a regional origin historically discriminated against (without racial descriptors or race-based discrimination), to a narrative involving a middle-class woman, and a character in Renaissance Italy born female but socially transitioning to live as a man in order to work, and finally to the

¹ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 1st edn (Routledge, 1990), doi:[10.4324/9780203900055](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203900055); Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review*, 43.6 (1991), pp. 1241–99, doi:[10.2307/1229039](https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039).

experiences of a sex worker of colour, who later redefines herself as a lesbian.² These portrayals are observed with no explicit hierarchy between them but instead with a consideration of their distinct and significant ways in which power, identity, and marginalisation intersect.

This project also focuses on the translations as part of the entangled system, specifically on how each text highlights intersectional struggles and subverts dominant power dynamics simultaneously in each context and understanding that the translations have the source text as a referent to articulate in a new language. In these contexts, both the new linguistic space and cultural specificity must be negotiated by all participants (translators, editors, publishers, readers, and more). For this reason, the study falls under the field of Translation Studies, and more specifically under Feminist Translation Studies. The field studies, highlights, and intervenes in the production and flow of translations from a feminist perspective. It offers a platform to scrutinise which works are translated into new contexts, considering the power dynamics of knowledge production on a global scale, as well as analysing the forms of literary content through its opportunities for feminist meaning, amongst many other approaches as outlined in *Feminist Translation Studies* edited by Olga Castro and Emek Ergun.³ These debates are discussed in detail in the literature review. A central consideration in this thesis are the translation techniques employed to create different effects than that of the source text, and which can affect the ‘visibility’ of the translation to control the reader experience in the target context.

Given the diverse approaches available to translators, a translated text can produce a range of effects that either enhance or reduce the sense of the translator’s ‘visibility,’ that is, the reader’s awareness of the text as a translation. In texts examined in this project, where the portrayal of marginalised voices and subversion of power dynamics are central, the translation is shaped by (non-)interventionist approaches that can amplify or diminish their more radical dimensions. At the same time, translators may employ techniques to preserve

² The term is discussed extensively in Gabriela Cabezón Cámara’s *La Virgen Cabeza* chapter.

³ *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Olga Castro Ergun Emek (Routledge, 2017), doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624).

the cultural visibility of the source texts, all of which are central to scholarly discourse on translator/translation visibility. The topic of translation (in)visibility has evolved significantly in academic discourse, largely in response to the dominance of ‘domestication’ in the literary mass market within the Anglophone context, a strategy that prioritises fluency and transparency by integrating translations into the dominant linguistic, aesthetic, and cultural norms of the receiving culture.⁴ This process accommodates the reader’s experience by negotiating or erasing signs of ‘foreignness,’ thereby limiting the diversity of translated works and constraining the use of more experimental or interventionist techniques, such as footnotes and commentary that openly introduce foreign elements. While Lawrence Venuti’s foundational critique of the predominance of ‘domestication’ in the US literary mass market of the 20th century remains influential, recent scholarship has moved beyond a paradigm of ‘domestication’ versus ‘foreignisation’ and has focused instead on market forces, institutional policies, digital media, and strategic translation decisions.⁵ In line with this, this study is centred on text effects, or in other words, on examining how different translators have approached segments of source texts that subvert diverse power dynamics, both in content and form, and how they have negotiated these into their translations, producing diverse effects. The purpose of this is to further depart from simplified paradigms of ‘domestication’ versus ‘foreignisation’ more prominent in the 20th century and early 21st and instead to offer a complex understanding of competing priorities in literary translation.

The implications that ‘invisibility’ has been brought by scholarly discussions are still very prominent to the discussion of the topic, as their potential to standardise and erase cultural contexts and individual perspectives in favour of dominant ideologies and power structures underscores the significance of further documenting the role of translation in cultural interchanges, which aligns with Mona Baker’s discussion on translation as a site of

⁴ Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd edn (Taylor & Francis Group, 2018), p. 12.

⁵ Some recent works relevant to this topic are Peter J. Freeth and Rafael Treviño, *Beyond the Translator’s Invisibility: Critical Reflections and New Perspectives* (Leuven University Press, 2024), viii; Kaisa Koskinen, *Translation and Affect: Essays on Sticky Affects and Translational Affective Labour* (Benjamins, 2020).

ideological negotiation.⁶ This is particularly relevant when examining minorities and marginalised groups, as the danger of erasure is furthered by the potential conflation of visibility as resistance. For instance, the third case study of this thesis examines *La Virgen Cabeza* and its translation into US English, *Slum Virgin*, focusing, amongst other aspects, on the translation of *travesti*, a culturally specific label for one of the protagonists, a sex worker from the slums in Argentina, which has no exact parallel in the US. This challenge highlights the evolving strategies of translation in negotiating such complexities. One of the reasons for translation being understood here as a negotiation, is how source texts offer a complex interplay between language and culture, which gives rise to linguistic specificity, serving as a means of expressing unique cultural aspects while also shaping and being shaped by the culture itself, a dynamic that is to be reproduced in the new linguistic and cultural context.⁷ This dynamic becomes particularly evident in transnational languages, whose mobility and diverse situatedness lead to regionally specific variations and localised lexicons that often resist direct translation. Languages such as English, Spanish, and Portuguese span vast physical and symbolic territories, transcending nation-state boundaries, while still maintaining institutional ties to specific nations. For example, when analysing Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's *La Virgen Cabeza*, part of which is written in Rioplatense Spanish, the text incorporates regionally specific vocabulary and sociocultural constructs that distinguish it from other varieties of Spanish. Some of these terms carry meanings deeply embedded in the cultural and historical realities of the region. Thus, the negotiation in literary translation involves observing how a language reflects and perpetuates the culturally ingrained values of an individual, community, or society within the source text and migrate these into a new language, often shaped by a different culture.⁸ In this process, the translator negotiates the purpose, effect, and style of the source text in order to align with the potential purpose and

⁶ Mona Baker, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (Routledge, 2006).

⁷ *Advances in Cultural Linguistics*, ed. by Farzad Sharifian, Cultural Linguistics (Springer, 2017), doi:[10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6).

⁸ Kramersch, 'Language and Culture', p. 41. For more on translation as a negotiation: *Translators, Interpreters, and Cultural Negotiators*, ed. by Federico M. Federici and Dario Tessicini (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), doi:[10.1057/9781137400048](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137400048).

desired effect for the target audience. This positions the translator as a mediator in the negotiation, opening a range of possibilities for the outcomes of this process.

In examining the portrayal of marginalised individuals and groups across various global contexts and their transmission through translation, this thesis aligns with Gayatri Spivak's analysis of the intricacies of representation and translation, particularly in her exploration of the subaltern.⁹ In her work, Spivak explains that the voices of marginalised individuals or groups are often suppressed within dominant discourses and critiques the role of intellectuals in representing these voices. This interrogation particularly critiques the Western sphere's ability to authentically represent non-Western subjects, highlighting the power dynamics inherent in the processes of translation and representation.¹⁰ Hence, as a vehicle for knowledge exchange and cultural representation, translation simultaneously holds the potential to perpetuate hegemonic structures while also challenging them. This thesis draws on Spivak's perspective to explore how specific marginalised or oppressed characters subvert the power dynamics that constrain them and how translation negotiates these dynamics across linguistic and cultural contexts. A significant portion of this project focuses on the experiences of marginalised individuals through the lens of sexuality and gender with a specific interest in how these characters navigate the power dynamics of a world where their identities and sexualities are peripheral, marginalised, or outrightly rejected.¹¹ Therefore, alongside Feminist Translation Studies, this thesis also aligns with Queer Translation Studies, as these two fields oftentimes do, however in other projects these are differentiated depending on their focus of interest.

⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, by Rosalind C. Morris (Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 20–54.

¹⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, by Rosalind C. Morris (Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 20–54; for more on culture please see: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=1099050>> [accessed 20 June 2024].

¹¹ The term 'trans*' will be explored in Section 3.

Queer Translation Studies has evolved significantly over the past decades, moving from an early focus on translating LGBTQ+ texts between dominant Western European languages to a broader engagement with the intersections of sexuality, language, and translingual transfer.¹² Recently, Queer Translation Studies scholars have been shaping the field's scope and direction through book-length contributions that structurally define key conversations and topics of interest, to which this project aims to contribute.¹³ These works align their approach to translation with the broader field of Translation Studies by defining translation as a deeply cultural practice.¹⁴ A key intervention of this project aligns with Baer and Bassi's claims that translation has been previously perceived as an act of colonial appropriation yet, from a Queer Translation Studies perspective, this frame that imposes a binary model on perceptions of translation can be challenged.¹⁵ Instead, it emphasises how translation enables texts to travel, forge alliances, and generate new formulations of identity and power dynamics in other linguistic and cultural settings. Rather than treating translation as a one-way flow of knowledge from centre to periphery, this approach recognises the agency of translators and the creative, political, and affective dimensions of their work. As defined by Brian James Baer and Serena Bassi:

Translation is [...] understood hermeneutically, as a site of complex negotiation between the foreign and the domestic, the global and the

¹² Brian James Baer and Serena Bassi, 'Introduction: A Second Take on Sexualities', in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Sexuality*, ed. by Brian James Baer and Serena Bassi (Routledge, 2024), pp. 1–12 (1), doi:[10.4324/9780429462962](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429462962).

¹³ Some of contemporary works that articulate the formulation and new directions of QTS considered here include: *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Sexuality*, ed. by Brian James Baer and Serena Bassi (Routledge, 2024), doi:[10.4324/9780429462962](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429462962); Brian James Baer, *Queer Theory and Translation Studies: Language, Politics, Desire* (Routledge, 2020), doi:[10.4324/9781315514734](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315514734); and *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer: Theory, Practice, Activism*, ed. by Brian James Baer and Klaus Kaindl (Routledge, 2017), doi:[10.4324/9781315505978](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315505978).

¹⁴ Baer and Bassi, 'Introduction', p. 3.

¹⁵ Baer and Bassi, 'Introduction', p. 6.

local, involving not only the diffusion of beliefs, concepts, and modes of being, but also their re-creation.¹⁶

In my work, I emphasise how translation serves as a dynamic space where sexual and gender norms, and the power dynamics influenced by them, are renegotiated, not merely reproduced. Crucially, Queer Translation Studies complicates the assumption that sexual epistemologies can be easily transposed across languages or that hegemonic frameworks, such as those of the Anglophone spheres in the US and the UK, operate through simplistic transmission.¹⁷ Instead, it reveals how translation actively reshapes and contests dominant discourses through creative linguistic borrowings, vernacular reinventions, and the introduction of neologisms.¹⁸ This thesis engages with these complexities by examining how culturally and historically-placed identities that have the potential of being non-mappable in other contexts (such as the a protagonist's in *La Virgen Cabeza*) are navigated in translation. It analyses the strategies used to address these difficulties and explores what they reveal about the cultural sensibilities shaping literary translation practices, the broader cultural contexts influencing each translation, and the ways in which translation becomes a site for reimagining and challenging normative understandings of gender and sexuality.

While Queer Translation Studies provides a crucial framework for understanding how translation negotiates sexual and gender norms, its insights can be expanded by bringing them into dialogue with Feminist Translation Studies, both fields commonly connected and related in their perspectives and objectives, often overlapping and in conversation. This combined approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of how translation functions not only as a site for challenging gendered and sexual discourses but also as a broader cultural practice that reconfigures power relations across linguistic boundaries. By bridging these fields, this thesis analyses the mechanisms of translation that navigate the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, socio-economic class, and social dynamics while revealing the ways in which translation both reflects and reshapes the cultural imaginaries of the source

¹⁶ Baer and Bassi, 'Introduction', p. 4.

¹⁷ Baer and Bassi, 'Introduction', p. 2.

¹⁸ Baer and Bassi, 'Introduction', p. 2.

and target contexts. Building on this compounded framework, the thesis investigates the potential of translated literary works to challenge entrenched social and cultural power dynamics by examining how subversive narratives are not only carried across linguistic boundaries but also reinterpreted, reframed, and often reconfigured for the target culture. In here, translation is understood through its potential to articulate forms of distinction and subversion that go beyond the source text. In other words, by negotiating the cultural and ideological contexts of both the source and target languages, translators can amplify or dilute a narrative's critique of dominant ideologies or highlight marginalised voices that might otherwise remain silenced. This approach aligns with Mona Baker's work on translation and narrative, which explores how translators foreground subversive narratives by engaging with and rewriting the cultural assumptions found in the source text.¹⁹ In doing so, they expose contradictions, challenge hegemonic viewpoints, and ultimately subvert dominant cultural paradigms.²⁰ However, this thesis diverges from Baker's methodology in significant ways. While her framework draws on an extensive corpus and focuses on politically charged contexts where translation operates as an explicit site of ideological struggle, this study is centred on power dynamics in a social rather than overtly political sense. It prioritises the deconstruction of cis-heteropatriarchal structures through feminist translation and sociolinguistic analysis. Rather than analysing how translators reframe overarching narratives, it investigates how language choices shape perceptions of identity, class, and social power dynamics. This focus on subversion within language itself treats both the source text and the translation as active sites of linguistic and social meaning-making, evidencing how translation participates in the continual negotiation of cultural identities and power relations.

¹⁹ Mona Baker, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (Routledge, 2006).

²⁰ Baker, *Translation and Conflict*, pp. 18-9.

1.2 Bones Exposed: Research Questions

This thesis interrogates how subversive and challenging portrayals of marginalised identities are formulated in source texts and negotiated through the act of translation. In other words, it examines how these portrayals are negotiated and transformed when translated into different cultural frameworks, where they retain, lose, or acquire new subversive possibilities. The selected translations reveal a range of approaches tailored to different purposes. For instance, Giovanni Pontiero's translation of *The Hour of the Star* demonstrates an intent to 'adapt' to the target audience by introducing Clarice Lispector's work to a new cultural context. This process involves a degree of adaptation to the expectations and dominant norms of the target culture, including the standardising of Lispector's disruptive linguistic choices. Notably, the translation subtly undermines Macabéa's agency and renders her a more feminised, and arguably more 'palatable,' protagonist. In contrast, *Com Ser-ho Alhora* adopts a more flexible approach, navigating the nuances of gender performance and its distinction from identity in Francescho's journey. This translation reproduces some of the wordplay present in the novel while revealing some of the limitations when approaching the humour of the narrative. Similarly, Frances Riddle's work on *Slum Virgin* employs technical effects to enhance the text, incorporating descriptions that provide contextual cultural clarity. At the same time, the translation negotiates the sensibilities of the target language with regards to race while demonstrating an inconsistent approach to the queer lexicon. Thus, each translation, while addressing distinct challenges arising from the authors' linguistic and social subversions, employs diverse strategies that offer valuable insights for future translation practice and theoretical understanding, and are here presented in a spectrum from more adapting (Pontiero's *A Hora da Estrela*), to preservative of the source text's subversion (Udina's *Com Ser-ho Alhora*), to finally most subversive and interventionist (Riddle's *Slum Virgin*). These strategies also inform the study of the cultural situatedness shaping translation decisions and, in turn, how translations reflect and renegotiate the intricate power dynamics of identity embedded in both the source and target texts. These considerations have been shaped by and in return formulated the central research questions that guide and organise this thesis, which are the following:

The central research question of this thesis is: **How do these novels and their translations explore issues of identity and power dynamics through a contemporary feminist lens?**²¹

To address this overarching question, the following subsidiary questions will guide the analysis, each focusing on specific aspects of the novels and the translations:

• **Section 1: How do *A Hora da Estrela* and *The Hour of the Star* explore identity and power dynamics through a psycholinguistic feminist lens?**²²

○How do the three text versions explore the Rodrigo S.M.-Macabéa dyad?

○How do these texts portray the use of poetic force and metanarrative for subversive purposes?

• **Section 2: How do *How to be Both* and *Com Ser-ho Alhora* explore identity power dynamics through a poststructuralist feminist lens?**²³

○How is Francescho's identity portrayed in each version of the text?

○How is Carol's identity explored in each text version through George's mediation?

²¹ This analysis adopts a dynamic understanding of feminist lenses, recognising that they vary according to their specific social and historical contexts. In *A Hora da Estrela*, written during the Brazilian military dictatorship, the narrative reflects a class- and economically conscious perspective on the power dynamics between the man narrator/subject and the woman protagonist/object. In contrast, *La Virgen Cabeza*, written in early 2000s Argentina, engages with an intersectional framework that considers social class, economic conditions, race, gender, and sexuality. While these novels address distinct thematic concerns, both remain centred on the oppression of the feminine, with different levels of intersectional struggles, and the potential for its liberation. Hence, the research questions will be formulated as 'contemporary feminist lens' to maintain the ability to adapt to each text as required.

²² This feminist lens is adopted following feminist psycholinguistic frameworks that best inform the dynamic presented by Lispector's text, which explores a system of projection between the narrator and the protagonist.

²³ In this case, the lens is selected regarding the source text's interest in challenging the restrictive nature of socially constructed labels, such as 'mother,' while also exploring how these labels are negotiated to pursue a fulfilling life. This focus is not on providing an extensive commentary on society as a whole but rather on individual experiences, such as Francescho's social transness, which is framed as a means to be an artist rather than an explicitly gendered identity. In other words, the text primarily reveals and deconstructs social labels and roles without being overtly transgressive or subversive of the system that formulates them.

- How do both texts portray the use of poetic force for subversive purposes?

• **Section 3: How do *La Virgen Cabeza* and *Slum Virgin* explore themes of identity power dynamics through an intersectional feminist lens?²⁴**

- How is Cleopatra's identity portrayed in each version of the text?
- How are the *travesti* and *negro* markers understood and conveyed in the translation?
- What are the narrative power dynamics between Quity and Cleopatra?

By addressing these questions, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how translation can serve as a tool of cultural negotiation and contention, as well as a medium with great potential for representation and feminist subversion. It underscores the pivotal role of translational practices in shaping and reshaping narratives, ultimately advocating for the celebration of practices that demonstrate sensitivity towards these critical issues.²⁵ Furthermore, this research seeks to identify areas where translation practices could potentially facilitate a more equitable and nuanced representation of marginalised identities. By highlighting successful strategies and existing gaps, this study aims to promote more inclusive and ethical translation approaches, fostering greater cultural diversity and social justice within literary discourse.²⁶

²⁴ In *La Virgen Cabeza*, the primary focus is on the use of intersectionality, as the novel highlights multiple overlapping categories of struggle and provides unique insights into these issues. For instance, Cleopatra, a trans woman sex worker of colour living in poverty in a *villa miseria*, navigates unique challenges while also embodying significant strengths, which are central to the narrative. Additionally, the novel showcases the Argentine use of terms like *negro* and *travesti*, which are highly controversial and often derogatory markers.

²⁵ This aligns with Mona Baker's (2006) study.

²⁶ This approach is widely embraced by Olga Castro and Emek Ergun in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, however within it, its most relevant segment is that of Damien Tissot's consideration for 'feminist translation ethics' in: Damien Tissot, 'Transnational Feminist Solidarities and the Ethics of Translation', in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Emek Ergun and Olga Castro (Routledge, 2017), pp. 29–41, doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624). For consideration of application of feminist strategies see Maria Reimóndez, 'The Curious Incident of Feminist Translation in Galicia: Courtcases, Lies and

1.3 Methodology: An Operating System

The methodology of this thesis is outlined here to clarify its positioning and key considerations, as well as its operations. One of the first decisions that shaped the project was the selection of the translations and source texts. This choice was informed by the recognition that knowledge production is still largely validated through frameworks developed in the Northern-Western countries; particularly within English-speaking academic contexts, due to the hegemonic status of English as the dominant international medium.²⁷ As Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues, such epistemic hierarchies often operate as a form of *epistemicide*, where non-Western ways of knowing are marginalised or rendered invisible.²⁸ This often results in artistic works from formerly colonised regions being used to support theoretical frameworks without acknowledging the intellectual and theoretical contributions of those regions themselves.²⁹ In response, I have deliberately chosen artistic productions that do not fit neatly into the binary of coloniser and colonised. Instead, the diversity of the selected translations has been deliberately chosen not to produce a systematic observation of one direction, but to present a wider perspective that foregrounds multiple directionalities and the complex power dynamics between contexts when texts migrate. In this way, this thesis distances itself from binary presentations of the ‘Global North’ and the ‘Global South,’ and instead of treating artistic production from marginalised contexts as evidence for knowledge production in hegemonic nations, like the US and the UK, it complicates this framework

Gender-N@tions’, *Galicia21: Journal of Contemporary Galician Studies*, ISSN 2040-7181, Nº. 1, 2009, Pags. 68-89, 21 (2009). A relevant decolonial approach to a comparative case study is: Virginia Mattioli, ‘The Influence of the Translation Tradition on the Construction of Identity: Analysis of the English Translation of Amereida’, *English Studies in Latin America: A Journal of Cultural and Literary Criticism*, no. 26 (2024), doi:[10.7764/ESLA.74749](https://doi.org/10.7764/ESLA.74749).

²⁷ Philip G. Altbach, ‘Globalization and the University: Realities in an Unequal World’, in *International Handbook of Higher Education*, ed. by James J. F. Forest and Philip G. Altbach (Springer Netherlands, 2007), pp. 121–39, doi:[10.1007/978-1-4020-4012-2_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-4012-2_8); Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science* (Polity, 2007); Walter D. Mignolo, ‘Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26.7–8 (2009), pp. 159–81, doi:[10.1177/0263276409349275](https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275); amongst others.

²⁸ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide* (Paradigm, 2014), p. 92.

²⁹ Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’.

by presenting multiple directionalities. This resonates with Santos' call for an ecology of knowledges which emphasises moving beyond reductive dichotomies while foregrounding the plurality of global and uneven epistemologies.³⁰ This approach acknowledges the uneven epistemological terrain while resisting reductive binaries as 'Global North' and 'Global South', which obscure and simplify the potential for a myriad of power dynamics within and across these spaces.

Still, this dual engagement also exposes the study's limitations in fully capturing the breadth of epistemological imbalances. The case studies adopted here illustrate these tensions by tracing literary works across linguistic and cultural contexts. They include translations from Brazil, Argentina, and the UK into Catalonia, the US, and the UK, revealing how linguistic hierarchies shape literary circulation. While the first case study parallels a more binary relation, *A Hora da Estrela* from Brazil to English (UK and US), this dynamic is further complicated on the following case studies, as for example, I examine *How to be Both* by Ali Smith alongside its translation into Catalan, a minority language within the European sphere, to reflect on internal European linguistic hierarchies. I also analyse *La Virgen Cabeza* by Argentine author Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, which engages with the complexities of writing in a coloniser language (Spanish) while reflecting on tensions between Argentinian Spanish, Castilian Spanish, and marginalised dialects such as Rioplatense Spanish (a dialect spoken in Argentina and Uruguay, around the River Plate Basin). Nevertheless, all the languages examined here originate in Europe, even as they have been imposed elsewhere through colonial processes. Portuguese, Spanish, and English carry colonial legacies that continue to facilitate their global dominance, while Catalan, despite its European origin, functions within a minoritised framework.

After selecting translations and source texts shaped by diverse dynamics, the next step in outlining this project was articulating its technical aspects; namely, its paradigm, approach, methods, and theoretical frameworks. These elements are closely interconnected, determining the critical lens through which the analysis is conducted and guiding the project. This research is situated within a critical paradigm, with the aim of challenging traditional gendered and sexual power structures and addressing broader social inequalities. It adopts a qualitative approach, engaging in in-depth textual analysis situated within specific socio-cultural contexts. This methodological orientation enables an understanding of how oppression is constructed and experienced by individuals and communities across cultural settings. The methodology is both critical and interpretive, drawing on insights from Critical Discourse Analysis, Feminist Translation Studies, and Queer Translation Studies. Critical

³⁰ Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*, p. 93 and 188.

Discourse Analysis provides tools to interrogate how language reflects and resists power structures, with particular attention to the role of linguistic practices in producing and maintaining social inequalities. Because of this, this research aligns with Critical Discourse Analysis's emphasis on uncovering processes of othering within the binary logics often embedded in language and culture that help reinforce social hierarchies, as defined by Norman Fairclough.³¹ Feminist Translation Studies, in turn, frames translation as a potentially emancipatory practice, one that can challenge dominant linguistic norms and actively resist patriarchal structures.³² A relevant example is María Reimóndez's translation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, in which she deliberately alternates between feminine and masculine grammatical forms rather than defaulting to the generic masculine.³³ This conscious disruption of gendered linguistic norms sparked opposition and controversy, revealing the political stakes embedded in translation choices. Following, Queer Translation Studies further extends this critique by addressing cisnormative and heteronormative assumptions in both language and translation. It explores how translation can destabilise fixed identities and unsettle normative frameworks around gender and sexuality. From this perspective, language is viewed as fluid and performative, and translation as a space where meaning and identity can be reconfigured. It is relevant to note however, that both Feminist and Queer Translation Studies are both commonly overlapped, differentiated at times, and complementary depending on the project, as their objectives consistently align with disrupting normative and hegemonic dynamics. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, these are seen as complementary as, in some of the analysis such as *A Hora da Estrela*, the dynamics challenged are focused on normative patriarchal hierarchies, whereas in *How to Be Both* and *La Virgen Cabeza*, patriarchal, cisnormative, and heteronormative dynamics are subverted and challenged. By integrating Critical Discourse Analysis, Feminist Translation Studies, and Queer Translation Studies, this research examines both translated and source texts as

³¹ Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Language in Social Life Series (Longman, 1995).

³² Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, Translation Studies (Routledge, 1996); *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Olga Castro Ergun Emek (Routledge, 2017), doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624).

³³ For more on this topic see: María Reimóndez, 'The Curious Incident of Feminist Translation in Galicia: Courtcases, Lies and Gender-N@tions', *Galicía21: Journal of Contemporary Galician Studies*, 1 (2009), pp. 68–89; also covered by Olga Castro Vázquez, 'El género (para)traducido : pugna ideológica en la traducción y paratraducción de O curioso incidente do can á media noite', *Quaderns: revista de traducció*, 2 October 2009, pp. 251–64
<<https://raco.cat/index.php/QuadernsTraduccio/article/view/139950>> [accessed 18 July 2025].

sites of cultural and ideological negotiation. It highlights how translation can function not only as a medium of cultural transmission but also as a tool of resistance and transformation.

The analysis conducted in the central chapters of this thesis is textual and comparative, and it aims to highlight potential transnational feminist critical practices.³⁴ The textual analysis examines the content and structure of selected novels to explore how marginalised identities are portrayed. It focuses on specific characters and the power dynamics within the literary space, analysing how these dynamics are reinforced or subverted through feminist techniques. These techniques range from the use of poetic force to narratology and the depiction of character arcs. The comparative analysis contrasts the source texts and the translations, including an intra-translational comparison between Giovanni Pontiero's and Benjamin Moser's versions. This method investigates how linguistic and cultural differences affect the representation of marginalised identities and power relations in each text to highlight similarities and differences.³⁵ It also examines the visibility and sensitivity toward the source text's effects and how these are reproduced, or transformed, in translation. Additionally, it explores the new linguistic opportunities presented by the translations, which, by operating in a new language, can represent feminist subversion in ways not available in the source language, and have the potential to uncover the potential for transnational feminist critical practices, or in other words, translations that create a bridge transnationally in which the complexity of marginalised struggles can create alliances and share resources. That is, for example, how the challenge to the gender binary's biological essentialism in *La Virgen Cabeza*, where Cleopatra is very proud and boisterous of her phallus, which does not undermine her legitimacy as a woman within the narrative,

³⁴ By feminist critical practice, I refer to the process of disrupting oppression through critical analysis that focuses on marginalisation and the power dynamics affecting those excluded from dominant positions in cis-hetero-patriarchal societies. This includes attending to how such subjects subvert their positions by exposing the inherent flaws in the monolithic structures of identity that underpin these systems of oppression. My practice embraces a transnational quality by engaging with diverse cultural contexts and adapting to their specificities. It resists universalising frameworks, particularly given that the identities represented in the translations are transnational in their construction by migrating these characters into new linguistic spaces informed by cultural specificity. This approach involves analysing the set of texts featuring a range of diverse intersectionality and adapting my approach to suit each context and subject position in their singularity. In doing so, I also respond to the challenges faced by translators when navigating cultural and ideological shifts across languages. For further information on transnational feminist theory and practice, please see: Carolyn Zerbe Enns, Lillian Comas Díaz, and Thema Bryant-Davis, 'Transnational Feminist Theory and Practice: An Introduction', *Women & Therapy*, 44.1–2 (2021), pp. 11–26, doi:[10.1080/02703149.2020.1774997](https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2020.1774997).

³⁵ Simon, *Gender in Translation*.

takes shape. In *Slum Virgin*, this opens an opportunity to bridge that ontology between the cultural contexts, offering a representation that can potentially create solidarity among LGBTQ+ communities. Finally, the analysis also considers the cultural specificity of the texts, examining the underlying power dynamics and cultural influences that shape them. This is, for example, particularly evident in the case of *La Virgen Cabeza*, which centres on Cleopatra, a *travesti* woman. *Travesti* identity is not directly mappable within the Anglophone sphere, posing a significant challenge for the translator. Frances Riddle addresses this by employing a diverse vocabulary of related identities, thereby bridging the cultural gap for Anglophone readers and capturing the nuances of Cleopatra's identity. Together, these methods provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how marginalised identities and power relations are represented, negotiated, and reimagined through feminist translation practices across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

This research is guided by an intersectional epistemological stance, which critiques the exclusionary practices of traditional knowledge systems by emphasising the multiple, intersecting axes of identity and power that shape knowledge production.³⁶ Knowledge is never neutral or singular; it is shaped by social locations, positionalities, and power relations.³⁷ Thus, the thesis explores these dynamics through the lens of translation, complicating the roles of the translator, author, and represented characters. The translator, as a 'knower,' is a subjective participant whose own experiences and positionality influence the translation process.³⁸ Similarly, the author is positioned as another 'knower,' whose intentions and social standing shape the text. The characters, as representations of the 'known,' are filtered through the lens of both the author and the translator, revealing how power and identity dynamics shape what is represented and how. In doing so, the thesis underscores the importance of epistemic justice in translation, advocating for a recognition of

³⁶ Gaile Pohlhaus Jr and Jeanine Weekes Schroer, 'Intersectional Epistemologies: The Ethics and Politics of Epistemic Practice: Special Issue of *Hypatia*', *Hypatia*, 38.4 (2023), pp. 665–73 (p. 666), doi:[10.1017/hyp.2024.10](https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2024.10).

³⁷ For more on situated knowledge and how knowledge is produced through lived experiences and the social fabric see Patricia Hill Collins's exploration and delineation of Black feminist epistemologies, *Black Feminist Thought, 30th Anniversary Edition: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Routledge, 2022), doi:[10.4324/9781003245650](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003245650).

³⁸ In here, 'knower' follows Gaile Pohlhaus Jr and Jeanine Weekes Schroer's conceptualisation in the dynamics of knower-known.

non-universal and contextually grounded knowledge, and highlighting the complexities of knowledge production in the act of translation.³⁹

As a queer researcher, my personal experiences inevitably shape my involvement in this study of marginalised identities in literature and translation. My queer identity allows me to bring a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in representations of gender and sexuality, areas in which I have lived experience. However, it is important to recognise that while my perspective offers valuable insight, my experiences are unique to me and cannot be mapped onto those of the characters in the novels or translations I study. This highlights potential gaps in knowledge and underscores the need to be mindful of my privileged positions within broader societal power dynamics, such as race, class, and social status. Specifically, as a member of the white, middle-class community, I am an outsider to many of the marginalised communities I strive to analyse in this research. Nevertheless, I aim to use this intersectional awareness to critically examine how literary texts engage with and challenge normative societal structures, exploring how these structures are differentially experienced across intersecting identities. This approach allows me to better understand how translations negotiate these representations in various cultural contexts and how my own privileges influences my interpretations. By acknowledging and placing myself within these intersecting spheres of identity, I endeavour to offer a well-rounded and thoughtful perspective. My dual awareness as both insider within the queer community and the limitation of my relative privilege aims to ensure that this research is empathetic, critically reflective, and fosters a more thorough analysis of marginalised identities in literature and translation. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge the geopolitical context in which this research is situated, as well as its institutional nature. Operating within the University of Glasgow, my positionality inevitably influences and contributes to the power dynamics this project seeks to critique and deconstruct. The global disparity in terms of academic production and cultural representation, underscores the complexities of this research.⁴⁰ While situated in a privileged institution, marked by its colonial history and linguistic dominance, and the resources these afford, this research also requires a critical reflexivity about how these privileges can impact on scholarly perspectives and interpretations. This is precisely why this research is involved in criticising the current trends in knowledge production and the direction in

³⁹ For more on epistemic justice see: Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007), doi:[10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198237907.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198237907.001.0001).

⁴⁰ Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton University Press, 2000); Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science* (Polity, 2007).

which English operates as a hegemonic language. By interrogating these dynamics, this study aims to challenge the dominant paradigms and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable discourse, recognising that actual progress requires an awareness of both the limitations and the transformative potential within our spaces.

1.4 Structural Overview

This thesis is organised into six main chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 present the introduction and literature review, situating the project within its wider context and outlining the rationale and technical framework that guides and structures it. Chapters 3 to 5 form the core of the thesis and focus on the case studies, each structured into three main sections: introduction, analysis, and concluding remarks. The analyses are further divided into thematically relevant subsections. Finally, Chapter 6 provides the conclusions, where the main findings are summarised and the research questions are revisited explicitly.

Chapter 3 presents the case study of Clarice Lispector's *A Hora da Estrela* and its two English translations, Giovanni Pontiero's (UK) and Benjamin Moser's (US), both titled *The Hour of the Star*. The chapter begins by introducing Lispector's literary, cultural, and historical context and her international reception, followed by a discussion on retranslation as both a literary and commercial phenomenon shaped by publishing trends and audience expectations. The core of the chapter offers a detailed comparative analysis of the source text and translations, starting with paratextual elements and how they frame the novel's themes of temporality. The analysis then explores the gendered power dynamics between narrator and protagonist, examining how translation choices reinforce or resist patriarchal structures. Further subsections address the ontological collapse of both characters, the translation of Macabéa's silences and the metafictional qualities of Lispector's style. Attention is given to the translation of intertextual references, stylistic innovations like fragmented syntax, and specific choices, such as the handling of "Quanto ao futuro.", that shape the novel's philosophical interpretations. The chapter also considers the representation of the body and gendered violence, showing how each translation amplifies or diminishes Macabéa's vulnerability and resistance to normative femininity.

Chapter 4 focuses on the case study of Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* and the Catalan translation, *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, by Maria Dolors Udina i Abelló. It begins by outlining the literary and cultural contexts of both texts and introducing the author and translator to frame the scope of the analysis. The chapter then explores the novel's central theme of 'bothness' through its narrative voice, particularly how the protagonists George and Francescho internalise their mothers' voices, raising

questions about identity, introjection, and the authority to narrate. This leads to a broader reflection on how storytelling intersects with societal forces, such as gender norms and expectations, with Carol's experience serving as a focal point. The chapter next addresses gender and sexuality, examining Francescho's 'social transness' as a means of navigating artistic aspirations due to historically placed norms, and how this functionality shapes gender expression. It also analyses Francescho's relationship with Barto to highlight how transness destabilises fixed sexual identities and generates narrative tension. The theme of perception, looking and being looked at, is explored through formal and paratextual strategies, including the use of art and punctuation to symbolise the gendered dynamics of the gaze. These gendered themes are brought together in an analysis of the novel's ontological treatment of gender, arguing that George performs a process of 'demastering' while Francescho asserts 'mastering' through creative production. It then turns to the novel's poetic voice, examining how shifts into verse disrupt linear narration and the ego, creating new possibilities for being and knowing. The chapter concludes by analysing the linguistic and cultural challenges of translating Smith's experimental prose into Catalan, highlighting how Udina negotiates humour, intertextuality, and formal complexity to expand on the novel's layered meanings.

Chapter 5 presents the final case study, focusing on Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's *La Virgen Cabeza* and the English translation *Slum Virgin* by Frances Riddle. It opens by introducing the author, translator, and the socio-political context of the novel, situating it within the Argentine literary tradition. The analysis explores the cultural relevance of the setting, the *villa miseria*, and highlights a major topic of discussion, which is the complexities of translating the term *queer* into Spanish-speaking contexts. Drawing on the idea of the floating signifier, the chapter highlights how identity in the novel resists fixed categorisation. It then examines the novel's bivocal narrative structure, followed by an examination of representations of motherhood and kinship as traditional family structures are dismantled and reimaged. The chapter then addresses the translation of culture-specific and politically charged terms such as *negro* and *travesti*, analysing how these are negotiated in translation. This leads into a broader reflection on *queer* as a transnational signifier, both disruptive and commodified, exemplified in the use of the 'queerer,' to finally focus on Cleopatra's subjectivity: her resistance to fixed identity narratives, her performance shaped by Argentine icons, and the term *trans** (with an asterisk) as the most fitting descriptor of her fluid identity. The chapter continues with a discussion of translation strategies such as complementation and supplementation, noting where these mediate cultural distance and where they risk erasure and it also analyses how gendered language is handled in translation, at times softened to avoid stereotype or sharpened to emphasise feminist critique.

Together, these chapters trace a path through which translation is framed as a deeply political and situated act, shaped by intersecting structures of gender, sexuality, and power. This overview has outlined the structure of the thesis and the central topics of discussion of each case study, tracing

how feminist and queer approaches shape both the analysis of the source texts as well as the translations. With the chapters mapped, the next section turns to the theoretical foundations that ground this research, situating it within the scholarly fields of Feminist and Queer Translation Studies.

2. Literature Review: Feminist and Queer Translation Studies

To ground this research within its wider scholarly context, this chapter outlines the theoretical landscape that informs and shapes the thesis. Through this, the literature review offers the necessary background for understanding the questions this project raises within the scholar sphere. It begins by situating feminist translation as a central framework, and foregrounds some of the scholarly work that led to the development of Feminist Translation Studies. After this, the chapter brings Queer Translation Studies into the discussion, both disciplines often overlapping, to operate a complex approach to the texts in a way that is attentive to the complexities of the cultural specificities they carry, with a specific focus in culturally embedded identity, which in return leads to an understanding of the approach that the thesis takes when analysing the subversion and challenges to cis-heteropatriarchal power dynamics presented by the source texts.

The idea of a ‘feminist translation,’ and the scholarly infrastructure required to analyse, define, and represent it, Feminist Translation Studies, is very malleable and therefore complex. This complexity stems from the variety of possibilities of what might constitute a feminist translation. One example of feminist translation is the translation of texts with potential for feminist impact in the target culture, such as Emek Ergun’s Turkish translation of Hanne Blank’s *Virgin: The Untouched History*.⁴¹ This can be considered feminist translation praxis, as Ergun deconstructs the myth of virginity as a social invention; an especially relevant intervention in the context of Turkey’s practices of ‘hymen testing’ (*kızlık zarı*) and punitive norms that endanger female lives daily, and the translation instead favours medical terms such as ‘*himen*,’ that are neutral in the target language, thus detaching

⁴¹ Emek Ergun, *Virgin Crossing Borders: Feminist Resistance and Solidarity in Translation*, Transformations: Womanist, Feminist, and Indigenous Studies (University of Illinois Press, 2023).

it from gendered loading.⁴² Conversely, feminist translation as a field can also be understood as a mode of intervention. For instance, Barbara Godard's translations of Nicole Brossard's work often expands and emphasises feminist meanings that might otherwise be diminished in a different language, such as making lesbian content more explicit by deliberately 'hijacking' the text in response to the grammatical limitations of English compared to French, where gender markers are more visible.⁴³ Feminist Translation Studies also refers to the study and advocacy of translators' rights. As a form of labour often perceived as feminine and performed predominantly by women, translation work is frequently undervalued, casualised, and underpaid, as, for example, explored in Fruela Fernández's study of women translators in Spain.⁴⁴ Taken together, these examples, some of which will be discussed in more detail below, underscore the contextual nature of 'feminist translation' and Feminist Translation Studies.

The work that led to the emergence of Feminist Translation Studies as a discipline in the late 20th century cannot be traced to a single intellectual or geographical origin. Rather, it is shaped by multiple feminist currents that redefined cultural and literary analysis across disciplines. In other words, the feminist movements that shaped both literary and translation theories were, and remain, plural, overlapping, and often resistant to clear categorisation. While some currents placed emphasis on material conditions, institutional discrimination, and labour, others foregrounded subjectivity, language, and the politics of representation. Yet, these orientations were not mutually exclusive. The 1970s slogan 'Women's liberation

⁴² A relevant analysis on Ergun's 'womanhandling' of the translation include: Sinem Bozkurt, "'Touched" Translations in Turkey: A Feminist Translation Approach,' *Moment Dergi*, 1.1 (2014), pp. 104–24, article 1, doi:[10.17572/moment.396579](https://doi.org/10.17572/moment.396579). For more on the construction of virginity in Turkey please refer to Ergun's published thesis: Emek Ergun, 'Social, Medical, and Legal Control of Female Sexuality through Construction of Virginity in Turkey' (unpublished, Towson University, 2006) <<http://archive.org/details/ConstructionofVirginityTurkey>> [accessed 30 July 2025].

⁴³ On Godard's translation Barbara Godard, 'Producing Visibility for Lesbians: Nicole Brossard's Quantum Poetics,' *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 21.2 (1995), pp. 125–37.

⁴⁴ Fruela Fernández, 'Assessing Masculine Domination in a Cultural Field: Women Translators and Book Translation Awards in Spain (1984–2012),' *The Translator*, 20.2 (2014), pp. 162–77, doi:[10.1080/13556509.2014.960649](https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2014.960649).

must first be a liberation of/from language’ encapsulates this dual concern: at once material and discursive, political and symbolic.⁴⁵ This feminist approach gained traction in some French contexts, though it can also be found in international spheres. As Sara Mills and Louise Mullany observe, despite the diverse methods and fields (feminist sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, amongst others) scholars working on gender and language tend to share ‘a specific political purpose by focusing on gender as a social, political, and ideological category.’⁴⁶ Feminist Translation Studies thus emerges from this interdisciplinary ground and its earlier articulations, and its most explicit coinage comes from Québec in the late 1970s and early 1980s, often referred to as the Canadian School, where scholars explicitly tied gender politics to translation politics. These interventions coincided with broader literary experiments by women writers who disrupted dominant men-centric discourse and reimagined femininity through formal and linguistic innovation.⁴⁷

Feminist literary criticism provided the foundational vocabulary and conceptual tools for these interventions. Thinkers such as Mary Ellmann (*Thinking About Women*, 1979), Kate Millett (*Sexual Politics*, 1970), Elaine Showalter (*A Literature of Their Own*, 1977), and Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (*The Madwoman in the Attic*, 1979) focused on the relationship between gender and literary production, while Adrienne Rich, in her essay ‘When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision’ (1972), called for a radical rewriting of inherited traditions. At the same time, Hélène Cixous (‘The Laugh of the Medusa,’ 1976) and Luce Irigaray (*This Sex Which Is Not One*, 1977) offered language-focused critiques of phallogentrism, and Cixous proposed *écriture féminine* as a form of embodied writing. Scholars like Toril Moi (*Sexual/Textual Politics*, 1985) and Ellmann navigated both literary and linguistic registers, underscoring the fluidity of feminist inquiry. Beyond language and literature-specific approaches, thinkers such as bell hooks (*Ain’t I a Woman*, 1981) exposed

⁴⁵ Simon, *Gender in Translation*, p. 8

⁴⁶ Sara Mills and Louise Mullany, *Language, Gender and Feminism: Theory, Methodology and Practice* (Routledge, 2011), doi:[10.4324/9780203814666](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203814666), p. 2.

⁴⁷ José Santaemilia, ‘A Corpus-Based Analysis of Terminology in Gender and Translation Research: The Case of Feminist Translation,’ in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Emek Ergun and Olga Castro (Routledge, 2017), pp. 15–28 (p.15), doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624).

the racialised exclusions within mainstream feminist discourse, while Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak ('Can the Subaltern Speak?,' 1988) challenged the universalising tendencies of Western feminism from a postcolonial standpoint.

One of the most notorious tensions within the feminist currents at the time is presented by the dominant white feminist movements in Europe and North America in the 1970s' aspiration to establish a universal gendered identity for all women, encapsulated by the slogan 'sisterhood is global.'⁴⁸ However, this vision fails to acknowledge the diverse experiences of women based on their race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, among other factors, leading to a lack of critical reflection on cultural hegemonies and the intersectional struggles experienced by women across the globe.⁴⁹ Latin American feminisms have engaged, since the mid-1990s, in discussions about these modes of action.⁵⁰ Their work has questioned dominant feminist projects that often operated under the assumption of 'universal citizenship' for 'third-world women.'⁵¹ Further divergences have also emerged, including the development of local theoretical knowledge and counter-narratives by anti- or decolonial feminist groups.⁵² These groups focus on anti-racist and anti-capitalist struggles, providing alternative frameworks that challenge dominant narratives and advocate for a more inclusive and representative understanding of feminism across different contexts.⁵³ In other words, there was a shift and marked interest in diversifying and focusing on the intersectional struggles of women as a response to the 1970s

⁴⁸ Maud Anne Bracke, Penelope Morris, and Emily Ryder, 'Introduction. Translating Feminism: Transfer, Transgression, Transformation (1950s–1980s),' *Gender & History*, 30.1 (2018), pp. 214–25 (218), doi:[10.1111/1468-0424.12358](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12358).

⁴⁹ Bracke, Morris, and Ryder, 'Introduction,' p. 218.

⁵⁰ Caroline Betemps Bozzano, 'Feminismos transnacionais descoloniais: Algumas questões em torno da colonialidade nos feminismos,' *Revista Estudos Feministas*, 27 (2019), p. e58972, doi:[10.1590/1806-9584-2019v27n158972](https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-9584-2019v27n158972); also noted by Simone Pereira Schmidt and Ana Gabriela Macedo, 'Feminismos Transnacionais: saberes e estéticas pós/descoloniais,' *Revista Estudos Feministas*, 27 (2019), pp. 1–5 (2), doi:[10.1590/1806-9584-2019v27n158959](https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-9584-2019v27n158959).

⁵¹ Bozzano, 'Feminismos transnacionais descoloniais,' p. e58972; also noted by Schmidt and Macedo, 'Feminismos Transnacionais,' p. 2.

⁵² Schmidt and Macedo, 'Feminismos Transnacionais,' p. 2.

⁵³ Schmidt and Macedo, 'Feminismos Transnacionais,' p. 2.

white feminist trends. For example, in the early 1980s, the perspectives of black feminists in the US played a pivotal role in shaping Adrienne Rich's understanding of the politics of location. She highlights the relative privileges associated with her identity as a white person and emphasises the need for North American feminists to recognise the specific patriarchal system within their own context.⁵⁴ Therefore, she stresses the relevance of the individual's contextual state, in this case, how women in different cultural and social contexts are subjected to varying levels of oppression.⁵⁵ Bracke, Morris, and Ryder also observe that earlier feminists did consider the political implications of a global feminist narrative. They note instead that the existing literature failed to thoroughly analyse interlingual translation and the intricate process of resignification involved in creating a translation.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, this gap is of significant interest to Feminist Translation Studies, which has recently sparked a surge in work and research focused on observing these processes. This thesis, for example, contributes to this trend.

Ultimately, the origins of Feminist Translation Studies as an academic and self-identified movement are broad, and some of its most defining features can be found in the work of Adrienne Rich, the 'Canadian School' of feminist translation (with notable figures such as Barbara Godard and Sherry Simon), and scholars like Suzanne Jill Levine, amongst others. These theorists challenge ideas about the invisibility of translation, the naïveté of the popular notion that 'sisterhood is global' since it overlooks the relevance of intersectionality. For the field of Feminist Translation Studies then, the cultural context of the agents involved in the exchange of written information, such as author, reader, and translator, and the role of politically engaged translation, as well as the content of said texts become a central point of interest.⁵⁷ The field, then, emerges to address the need to examine the ideologies

⁵⁴ Adrienne Rich, 'North American Tunnel Vision,' in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979-1985*, by Adrienne Rich (W.W. Norton, 1986), pp. 160–66 (p. 166).

⁵⁵ Bracke, Morris, and Ryder, 'Introduction,' p. 218.

⁵⁶ Bracke, Morris, and Ryder, 'Introduction,' pp. 218-9.

⁵⁷ Bracke, Morris, and Ryder, 'Introduction,' p. 215; Suzanne Jill Levine, *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction*, Dalkey Archive Scholarly Series, 1st Dalkey Archive ed (Dalkey Archive Press, 2009).

underpinning the discourses surrounding translation debates within Translation Studies. That is, Translation Studies shifted the attention of critical analysis towards a more robust consideration of the concept of ‘culture’ in their approaches, which was partly addressed with feminist intention by the emerging discipline of Feminist Translation Studies. This does not mean that feminist translations, or in other words, translations that act in ways that could retrospectively be considered and labelled ‘feminist’ due to their involvement with women’s rights, techniques of visibility, and other politically conscious purposes, did not take place before, but instead that this is the origin of an organised academic interest to analyse and promote these practices in the world of translation as well as highlight their academic relevance.

To further understand Feminist Translation Studies’ articulation of agency in texts, it is important to highlight how scholars explain the lack of neutrality of texts. Feminist translators have demonstrated throughout history that no text is neutral or universal.⁵⁸ In other words, the ideological and cultural contexts of active agents involved in a text (author, translator, and reader, amongst others) influence the creation, dissemination and inferred meaning of a given text.⁵⁹ However, due to the wrong assumption by some mainstream contexts in which text, particularly translations, are perceived as capable of ‘neutrality,’ in that meaning invisible, the work field of translation has been marked by a pressure for translators to sustain the idea of ‘neutrality,’ ultimately diminishing the translator’s agency.⁶⁰ Oftentimes, discussions of professional ethics in translation are reduced to textual fidelity (a notion fundamentally challenged by the recognition that neutrality is unattainable) and accountability to the client, however these discussions should incorporate broader ideological and political dimensions to best address the translator’s ethical responsibilities.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Luise Von Flotow, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the ‘Era of Feminism’* (Routledge, 2016), doi:[10.4324/9781315538563](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315538563), p. 43.

⁵⁹ Barbara Godard, ‘Theorizing Feminist Discourse / Translation,’ *Tessera*, 1989, doi:[10.25071/1923-9408.23583](https://doi.org/10.25071/1923-9408.23583), p. 90.

⁶⁰ Maria Tymoczko, ‘Translation, Ethics and Ideology in a Violent Globalizing World,’ in *Globalization, Political Violence and Translation*, ed. by Esperanza Bielsa and Christopher W. Hughes (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), pp. 171–94 (186), doi:[10.1057/9780230235410_9](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230235410_9).

⁶¹ Tymoczko, ‘Translation, Ethics and Ideology,’ p. 186.

This particular focus on fidelity, sometimes referred to as equivalence, leads to what Godard coins as ‘in-different’ texts, where both source and target texts are abridged to a mainstream quality precisely due to the reduction of meaning and the assumption of neutrality, leading in the end to a flattening of both texts which fails to comprehend their multifacetedness.⁶² As such, feminist translations, by emphasising difference, deterritorialisation, displacement, and contamination, deviate from any notion of equivalence and any ‘in-different’ translation.⁶³ To refer to this practice of transformation and performance involved in the creation of translations, specifically of the process of creating meaning through translation, Godard defines the feminist translation as a ‘transformance,’ combining the words translation and performance.⁶⁴

In recognising that no text can be impartial and that all texts, including translations, are influenced by gendered perspectives, the concept of feminist translation has emerged as a critical practice for analysis and intervention. In this regard, language itself becomes central to the conversation, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that the feminist translator must analyse languages as a critical instrument to identify the means through which gendered agency operates.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Spivak adds intersectionality to this by noting how translators disregard non-European women writers’ literary styles, as ‘the translator cannot engage with, or cares insufficiently for, the rhetoricity of the original.’⁶⁶ This situation has led to a species of neo-colonialist interpretation of the non-Western scene due to the distancing and disregard for literary styles that may be discarded in the translation when approaching the non-Western text. Thus, non-Western literature is translated unethically, creating a homogeneous rhetoric that completely obliterates any cultural or gender differentiation.⁶⁷ Another relevant aspect raised by Spivak is how the way ‘the other’ is depicted in language and reinterpreted in translation in another language significantly affects

⁶² Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 44.

⁶³ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 44.

⁶⁴ Godard, ‘Theorizing Feminist Discourse,’ p. 91.

⁶⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (Routledge, 1993), p. 201.

⁶⁶ Spivak, *Outside*, p. 202.

⁶⁷ Spivak, *Outside*, p. 204.

the role and identity of this ‘other,’ in this case, women, a central topic examined in this thesis.⁶⁸

To identify or produce a feminist translation then, some scholars have come forward proposing translation strategies they perceive as inherently feminist. For instance, in her book *Translation and Gender*, Luise von Flotow delineates an array of strategies and techniques aimed at producing feminist translations: complement, notes, preface, and hijacking.⁶⁹ While terms like notes and preface are relatively self-explanatory, as these fall within the more standard paratextuality used in literature, the terms ‘complement’ and ‘hijacking’ require further explanation. Initially used pejoratively by David Homel to describe Lotbinière-Harwood’s interventionist approach to Lise Cauvin’s *Lettres d’une autre*, scholars such as Flotow and Godard have reclaimed the term ‘hijacking.’⁷⁰ They use it to describe the deliberate actions of a feminist translator in appropriating a text to construct feminist meaning.⁷¹ In this way, the feminist translator affords a more radical agency over their translation by actively changing it to fit different feminist purposes while acknowledging this openly in the paratextuality supporting the translation, such as in the preface. The other term that requires further exploration is ‘complement,’ which refers to the act of ‘complementing’ a translation by adding information to counteract androcentric biases present in the source text. This process involves making marginalised voices more visible, addressing gender biases, and providing critical additions that engage with the source text.⁷² Additionally, it highlights the translator’s visibility and ethical involvement in the impact of their translation.

⁶⁸ Simon, *Gender in Translation*, p. 5.

⁶⁹ For further information on these techniques followed with discussion and examples, please see Flotow, *Translation and Gender*.

⁷⁰ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 82.

⁷¹ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 82.

⁷² Flotow, *Translation and Gender*.

Flotow points out that the subversion of power relations in one language may not directly translate to another.⁷³ This can undermine feminist texts that subvert patriarchal linguistic constructs when they are translated into another language with different forms of linguistic oppression. In other words, the translator's choices, for instance, can render the translation less ambiguous, potentially undermining the source text's purpose.⁷⁴ However, Flotow also acknowledges the controversy surrounding such overt interventionism, as the traditional expectation is for the translator to remain 'invisible.'⁷⁵ Such intervention can also risk ethical overreach, especially when it imposes dominant feminist values onto texts from marginalised or postcolonial contexts, and it also may erase cultural specificities and reproduce the very hierarchies feminist translation seeks to challenge. Despite this, the manipulation of translated texts to support or reflect specific ideologies has a long historical precedent.⁷⁶ Hence, while controversial, the interventionist approach advocated by Flotow is deeply rooted in the history and practice of translation.

Feminist translation has significantly contributed to the field by foregrounding the translator's agency and insisting on ethical accountability through visible intervention. In order to avoid unconsciously reproducing dominant ideologies, which takes place when one fails to adopt a critical ideological stance, the translator must remain visible, self-aware, and critically engaged.⁷⁷ For this reason, ethical feminist translation requires a sustained commitment to self-reflexivity and a recognition of the translator's role in the inevitable re-creation of meaning.⁷⁸ These practices challenge the illusion of neutrality and urge the

⁷³ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 22.

⁷⁴ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 22.

⁷⁵ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 24.

⁷⁶ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. p. 24.

⁷⁷ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (Monthly Review Press, 2002) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=2081662>> [accessed 29 July 2024], pp. xvi-xvii.

⁷⁸ Olga Castro, 'Talking at Cross-Purposes? The Missing Link between Feminist Linguistics and Translation Studies', *Gender & Language*, 6.2 (2012), pp. 35–58 (42), doi:[10.1558/genl.v7i1.35](https://doi.org/10.1558/genl.v7i1.35).

feminist translator to resist imposing a singular or essentialist feminist perspective.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the translator's, and in many cases all active agents affecting the final translated text's, critical blind spots remain one of the most significant limitations since these aspects of ideology or discourse remain unacknowledged precisely because they are internalised, limiting the translator's critical practice. This underlines the need to incorporate more diverse voices and perspectives into the translation process. Therefore, while feminist translation practices strive to challenge hegemonic structures, they must also remain vigilant of how their own positionality may inadvertently reinforce them.

On the topic of interventions as a common practice, Lotbinière-Harwood stands out by emphasising the compelling reasons for these interventions, such as making women visible in language and society by making them more visible in the texts.⁸⁰ Metatexts, including statements, theoretical writings, prefaces, and footnotes, are among the most visible translation techniques endorsed by feminist translation.⁸¹ This prominence is due to the translator's evolving identity as a distinguishable and visible 'self,' a trend that began in the 1970s.⁸² Flotow specifically links this development to the influence of gender:

Translators published in a cultural context affected by feminism are remarkable for the metatexts that draw attention to the 'translator-effect,' the mark each translator, as a gendered individual, leaves on the work. In the case of translators who identify themselves as feminists, these texts display a powerful sense of the translator's identity.⁸³

⁷⁹ Castro, 'Talking at cross-purposes?,' p. 42.

⁸⁰ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 27; in reference to Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, *Re-Belle et Infidèle: La Traduction Comme Pratique de Réécriture Au Féminin = The Body Bilingual: Translation as a Re-Writing in the Feminine* (Les éditions du remue-ménage ; Women's Press, 1991).

⁸¹ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 35.

⁸² Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 35.

⁸³ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 35.

Other strategies used in feminist translations include the addition of translator/author photographs and bio-bibliographies, as seen practised by feminist translators in Canada, as well as increasingly elsewhere.⁸⁴ This approach aims to establish a sense of equality between both roles and their respective contributions.⁸⁵ However, some critics argue that the use of these metatexts creates ‘noise,’ detracting attention from the central text.⁸⁶ These considerations become particularly relevant when viewed within a framework of capitalist consumption and the commercialisation of translation, both of which have often favoured the illusion of transparency. Nevertheless, there are numerous instances in which audiences have expressed interest in engaging with a translated text while being overtly comfortable with its character as a translation, demonstrating awareness of and curiosity about both, source and target texts. This suggests that such considerations must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with attention to specific contexts. Ultimately, however, ethical practices and the translator’s agency and transparency should take precedence. Providing contextual information, whether to enrich the reader’s understanding of translation choices, the cultural and historical context of the source text, or the material, crafted nature of the translated artefact, should not be dismissed in favour of offering a seamless reading experience. Rather, such decisions should be made deliberately, in alignment with the intended effect of the target text and grounded in the translator’s agency.

Moving from specific form to the reason for feminist translation, one of the most significant critiques of Feminist Translation Studies concerns its limited tangible socio-political impact. This perceived ineffectiveness has often been attributed to the field’s association with avant-garde experimental writing, particularly in its early stages. Early feminist translation practices tended to gravitate toward experimental source texts and forms, emphasising subversion and linguistic disruption, which leads to, for example Rita Felski’s criticism of the idea that the disruption or subversion of language rarely transcends the text

⁸⁴ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 36.

⁸⁵ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 36.

⁸⁶ Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, p. 78.

itself.⁸⁷ Felski also notes that French feminism overvalues the transformative impact of linguistic ambiguity. She considers experimental writing an exclusive domain that often fails to address the subversion of formal structures and create actual social change.⁸⁸ However, such critiques risk overlooking the more subtle yet significant forms of impact that feminist translation can advance, particularly the individual consciousness-raising and political awareness it can instigate. These effects, though indirect, and oftentimes, if in the realm of experimental writing popular with academic or elite spheres, may ripple outward, contributing to broader cultural shifts. For instance, feminist translation's emphasis on exposing the misogyny embedded in language, and its attention to how patriarchal structures are reproduced through linguistic norms, can catalyse efforts to reclaim or rearticulate marginalised experiences. While these transformations may be slow to gain formal recognition or mainstream traction, they remain essential in challenging dominant narratives and enabling alternative ways of understanding gendered realities.

Regarding the overall direction and potential impact of Feminist Translation Studies, as observed by Mona Baker, the primary objective of Feminist Translation Studies is to conceptualise 'the future of the transnational as a polyphonic space where translation (as a feminist praxis) is embraced as a tool and model [...] in pursuit of justice and equality for all.'⁸⁹ More specifically, Claudia de Lima Costa highlights the opportunities Feminist Translation Studies offers to challenge and reassess dominant discourses on the international stage:

How can feminists in the North and South (understood more as metaphorical spaces opened up by the frictions of power asymmetries, rather than concrete and delimited geographical

⁸⁷ Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 5.

⁸⁸ Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁹ Mona Baker, 'Translation as an Alternative Space for Political Action,' *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest*, 12.1 (2013), pp. 23–47 (23) <<https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/jrul/item/?pid=uk-ac-man-scw:160959>> [accessed 7 December 2023].

regions), working in the gaps and silences of translation and underscoring unequal relations between regions, languages, and institutions, contribute to a counter-practice of translation (traduttore, traduttore) that disrupts hegemonic narratives about gender, feminism, and the subaltern?⁹⁰

Still, contemporary scholarship has revealed a lack of substantial cross-cultural reflection on gender and translation, failing to capture the geographical and interdisciplinary diversity of Feminist Translation Studies. This gap is highlighted in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives* (2017), edited by Olga Castro and Emek Ergun.⁹¹ This inter/trans-cultural collaboration explores the cross-border interdependence of resistance movements against hegemonic systems.⁹² The term transnational here becomes a central aspect of the conceptualisation of Feminist Translation Studies and refers to cross-border alliances and their political power to challenge hegemonic structures, underscoring the crucial role of translation, especially feminist translation, in these alliances.⁹³ In other words, it platforms feminist praxis within translation as a means to bridge communities, epistemologies, and promote political activism; broadening the understanding of feminist translation practices and theories.

Transnational feminisms within contemporary Feminist Translation Studies emphasise intersectionality, critiquing international and global feminisms for positioning the Western, white, straight, and cis woman as the primary reference, neglecting and ‘othering’ diverse women.⁹⁴ They also critique these feminisms for focusing on nation-state borders,

⁹⁰ Claudia de Lima Costa, ‘Feminist Theories, Transnational Translations, and Cultural Mediations,’ in *Translocalities/Translocalidades: Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Americas*, ed. by Sonia E. Alvarez and others (Duke University Press, 2014), pp. 133–48 (p. 135).

⁹¹ Ergun and Castro, ‘Introduction,’ p. 3.

⁹² Castro and Ergun, ‘Introduction,’ p.2.

⁹³ Olga Castro and María Laura Spoturno, ‘Feminismos y traducción: apuntes conceptuales y metodológicos para una traductología feminista transnacional,’ *Mutatis Mutandis. Revista Latinoamericana de Traducción*, 13.1 (2020), pp. 11–44 (13), doi:[10.17533/udea.mut.v13n1a02](https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.mut.v13n1a02).

⁹⁴ Castro and Spoturno, ‘Feminismos y traducción,’ p. 13.

ignoring stateless nations, and being complicit in the developed world's imposition of neoliberal policies that exploit humans, nature, and other species.⁹⁵ Conversely, there is a growing interest in transnational feminist networks within Feminist Translation Studies, which consider intersectional and contextualised gender inequalities, as identified by Valentine Moghadam, Aili Mari Tripp, and Myra Marx Ferree.⁹⁶ The escalating interest in transnational feminist networks can be attributed to their capacity to challenge global power dynamics through intellectual, political, and cultural exchanges.⁹⁷ However, it becomes apparent that in order to support transnational feminist networks, collaborative spaces must be deliberately polyphonic and seek to establish a multiplicity of voices that, regardless of language and placement, establish equality of expression.⁹⁸ Olga Castro and María Laura Spoturno also explain that the current field of Feminist Translation Studies aims to intervene in the unidirectional flow of knowledge established by dominant cultural imperialism, which enforces a hierarchical system based on location.⁹⁹ Specifically, the field aims to challenge the current knowledge transit that prioritises the creation of knowledge from hegemonic nations, such as the US and the UK, by supporting and disseminating knowledge from non-hegemonic and underrepresented contexts. These circulate 'against the current,' introducing and legitimising these epistemologies within hegemonic nations, while also facilitating their exchange across multiple oppressed communities, nations, and contexts. In other words, it aims to contribute to a counter-hegemonic circulation of epistemologies on a transnational level. This project, for example, stands as an example of translation analysis to platform works from underrepresented contexts, such as *A Hora da Estrela* and *La Virgen Cabeza*, here defined as feminist and subversive, and considering their directionality to hegemonic

⁹⁵ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' pp. 16-7.

⁹⁶ Valentine M. Moghadam, *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (Johns Hopkins University Press, c2005) <<https://hdl-handle-net.ezproxy2.lib.gla.ac.uk/2027/heb04730.0001.001>> [accessed 31 July 2024]; *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*, ed. by Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp (New York University Press, 2006).

⁹⁷ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 17.

⁹⁸ María Reimóndez, 'We Need to Talk... to Each Other: On Polyphony, Postcolonial Feminism and Translation,' in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Emek Ergun and Olga Castro (Routledge, 2017), pp. 42–55, doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624).

⁹⁹ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 17.

contexts.¹⁰⁰ This directionality is informed within this project from a perspective that aligns with Castro and Spoturno's critique of hegemonic practices, particularly addressing epistemic privileges that influence international power dynamics.¹⁰¹ These privileges include the role of English as a lingua franca, the exploitation of empirical examples from marginalised contexts, and the use of 'domesticated' and 'exoticising' aspects from these contexts, which reveal an unawareness of the imperialist domination involved in said practises.¹⁰² In light of this, the directional choices in this project are made with a critical awareness of these dynamics, while also acknowledging the limitations inherent in the scope of this study. In particular, *La Virgen Cabeza* serves as a relevant example, where its portrayal of marginalised identities and social dynamics in Argentina, especially the racialised language used such as the term *negro*, poses unique challenges in translation.

Transnational alliances then require multilingualism and translation to thrive. As Caroline Betemps emphasises, there is a marked need to facilitate dialogues and address frictions in transnational exchanges without perpetuating colonial violence, aiming instead to build effective communication that avoids repeating colonial patterns.¹⁰³ An example that best articulates the potential for maintaining harmful colonial dynamics was experienced by a group of Indigenous women against the imposition of Spanish as the only accepted language at the 2007 Latin American and Caribbean feminist meetings.¹⁰⁴ This highlights the complexity of asymmetries that transnational alliances can produce, leading to systematic silencing effects that counter the objective of establishing transnational feminist networks. This example also specifically underscores the importance of language, multilingualism, and translation in transnational alliances, which further supports Castro and

¹⁰⁰ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 17; Claudia de Lima Costa, 'Lost (and Found?) In Translation: Feminisms in Hemispheric Dialogue,' *Latino Studies*, 4.1 (2006), pp. 62–78 (73), doi:[10.1057/palgrave.lst.8600185](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.lst.8600185).

¹⁰¹ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 17.

¹⁰² Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 17.

¹⁰³ Betemps, 'Feminismos transnacionais descoloniais.'

¹⁰⁴ Liliana Ancalao, 'El Idioma Silenciado,' in *Feminismos y poscolonialidad*, by Karina Bidaseca (Godot, 2022), pp. 121–26.

Ergun's argument that the future of feminism lies in the transnational, which is accessible only through translation.¹⁰⁵

Feminist contributions have been central in dismantling ethnocentric paradigms within the modern-colonial-patriarchal system and creating space for transnational conversations, alternatives, and realities.¹⁰⁶ Translation and culturally specific understandings enable these feminist insights, amongst other critical approaches to oppressive power dynamics, to circulate, fostering cross-border dialogues. Building on this, Simone Pereira Schmidt and Ana Gabriela Macedo document alternate knowledge-power systems that provide opportunities for new political alignments and the development of unconventional and non-hegemonic epistemologies. In doing so, they extend feminist critiques of exclusionary structures, such as patriarchal and colonial structures which privilege men and whiteness respectively and stratify others into intersectional forms of marginalisation and oppression.¹⁰⁷ This focus on alternative epistemologies resonates with Jack Halberstam's *The Queer Act of Failure*. Halberstam here reframes what capitalist society casts as 'failure' into a site of anticapitalistic and anticolonial struggle, as he emphasises illegibility and platforms ways of being that evade normative capture.¹⁰⁸ This framework is opted as a parallel to Scott Sandage's *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America*, where capitalism's construction of a narrative of 'winners' and 'losers' erases the records of those perceived as 'failure' in ways that sustain the US capitalist narratives.¹⁰⁹ Halberstam, however, reskins this critique to articulate the operations of cis and

¹⁰⁵ Castro and Ergun, 'Introduction,' p.1.

¹⁰⁶ María Lugones, 'Colonialidad y género: hacia un feminismo descolonial', in *Género y descolonialidad*, ed. by Walter Mignolo, 2nd edn (Del Signo, 2014), pp. 13–42 (p.16) <<http://www.marcialpons.es/libros/genero-y-descolonialidad/9789873784972/>> [accessed 4 July 2025].

¹⁰⁷ Schmidt and Macedo, 'Feminismos Transnacionais,' p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke University Press, 2011), p. 88 doi:[10.1515/9780822394358](https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822394358).

¹⁰⁹ Scott A. Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 9.

heteronormative narratives.¹¹⁰ For example, through documentaries and biological studies of animal life, heterosexual reproduction and ideas surrounding the nuclear family are projected and reinforced, exposing biases taking place in these fields, which leads to Halberstam's call for a space for counter-discourses that validate non-normative relations and resituate queerness within a 'persistently queer universe.'¹¹¹ Building on this, this project seeks to examine the role of literary translation in shaping transnational imaginaries of identity and power dynamics. It aims to deconstruct monolithic notions of identity and cis-heteropatriarchal structures, ultimately facilitating the recognition, representation, and potential for transnational allyship and understanding through the circulation of feminist and subversive literary texts.

This 'other' economy of meaning that embraces multiplicity and rejects monolithic interpretations is also captured in an 'other' way of writing, in this case referring to texts like the ones in this thesis which present unique perspectives interested in conceptualising this 'other' economy of meaning that differ from normative and dominant identities, both source and target texts.¹¹² Feminist Translation Studies emphasises that texts do not have a singular truth within this economy of meaning; in other words, no rigid framework or procedure can fully capture the essence of a feminist translation.¹¹³ Instead, feminist translations must be fluid, adaptive, and responsive to the complexities of the texts they engage with. In this light, feminist translation is not about maintaining a modest and self-effacing stance; instead, as Godard suggests, the feminist translator participates in what might be termed 'womanhandling' the text.¹¹⁴ This involves producing a translation that asserts the translator's critical difference, engages in perpetual re-reading and re-writing, and openly displays the signs of the translator's manipulation of the text.¹¹⁵ This process of re-

¹¹⁰ Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, p. 88.

¹¹¹ Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, p. 37.

¹¹² Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 131.

¹¹³ Godard, 'Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation,' p. 90.

¹¹⁴ Godard, 'Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation,' p. 94.

¹¹⁵ Godard, 'Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation,' p. 94.

interpretation and re-creation is vital in ensuring that the voices of women writers like the ones featuring this thesis continue to challenge and disrupt oppressive and essentialist narratives, both in their source languages and in translation. And, as it is becoming increasingly apparent in this literary review due to the prominence of the term ‘transnational,’ contemporary Feminist Translation Studies is giving rise to another related category within its taxonomy known as Transnational Feminist Translation. Transnational Feminist Translation, like Feminist Translation Studies, lacks a fixed definition. Instead, it evolves as an ongoing dialogue responding to new and diverse forms of systemic oppression and varying discursive, linguistic, geopolitical, and sociocultural contexts.¹¹⁶ It draws on the intellectual and political legacies of racial feminist thought, class-based and Marxist critiques, as well as postcolonial, decolonial, indigenous, third-world, dissident, lesbian, and queer movements.¹¹⁷ These perspectives contribute to the intersectional politics of contemporary feminism, highlighting the limitations of Western hegemonic feminism, which has traditionally promoted a monolithic vision of gender.¹¹⁸ In contrast, transnational feminism advocates for an intersectional understanding that considers how various identity layers, such as race, class, and cis-heteronormativity, interact within systems of oppression. These analytical frameworks address the critiques raised by scholars like Martín Ruano, who point out the tendency to conceptualise women and men through binary lenses, neglecting the interaction of gender with other identity factors.¹¹⁹ Therefore, transnational feminist theories offer a more nuanced vision of power relations in the context of neoliberal globalisation.¹²⁰ They also challenge the simplistic and unidimensional ideas that have dominated some previous versions of traditional Translation Studies, which often fail to

¹¹⁶ Castro and Spoturno, ‘Feminismos y Traducción,’ p. 13.

¹¹⁷ Castro and Spoturno, ‘Feminismos y Traducción,’ p. 16.

¹¹⁸ Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000); as noted in Castro and Spoturno, ‘Feminismos y Traducción,’ p. 16.

¹¹⁹ María Rosario Martín Ruano, ‘La Resistencia Al Trasluz: La Traducción Feminista En Examen,’ *DeSignis*, 12 (2008), pp. 49–56; as noted in Castro and Spoturno, ‘Feminismos y Traducción,’ p. 23.

¹²⁰ Castro and Spoturno, ‘Feminismos y Traducción,’ p. 33.

problematise the circulation of knowledge fully.¹²¹ Through the linguistic and discursive materialities inherent in translation, translated texts can either enable or constrain processes of cross-border mobility, semantic re-inscription, and reception trajectories.¹²² Ultimately, Transnational Feminist Translation within Feminist Translation Studies advocates for cross-border alliances among diverse women, challenging the intertwined systems of oppression in neoliberal frameworks and striving for a more just and egalitarian world, a taxonomic space within scholarly production to which this projects contributes to.¹²³

A highly relevant example of this raise of transnational consciousness is Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser's *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto*, which advocates for an anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, environmentalist, and transnational feminism that benefits 99% of the global population.¹²⁴ This democratising and inclusive manifesto emphasises the direction of textual flows, questions the hegemony of English, and promotes feminist debates and exchanges across diverse contexts of reception.¹²⁵ A crucial dimension of transnational feminist praxis, then, is the contest over who translates and how readers engage with texts, which in hegemonic practices sustains the status quo, whereas in feminist intervention the dominant power dynamics are challenged.¹²⁶ With reference to feminist epistemologies then, the ideal of gender justice upheld in this framework is that of non-essentialist situated universality, even within transnational perspectives, as questioning the social responsibility inherent in the act of translation and the reflection on translation practices is crucial in advocating for gender justice transnationally.¹²⁷ This underscores the importance of questioning the social responsibility

¹²¹ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y Traducción,' p. 33.

¹²² Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y Traducción,' p. 33.

¹²³ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y Traducción,' p. 33.

¹²⁴ Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser, *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto* (Verso, 2019); for comments on this please see: Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 30.

¹²⁵ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 30.

¹²⁶ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 31.

¹²⁷ Tissot, 'Transnational Feminist Solidarities,' p. 27.

inherent in the act of translation and the reflections on translation practices.¹²⁸ Consequently, it is impossible to define specific translation strategies and techniques as absolute, as social struggles are situated, and training translation and interpreting professionals requires active intervention and flexibility.¹²⁹ Thus, feminist translation strategies proposed by academics, such as Flotow's, retain significant relevance and interest, although they do not offer definitive solutions. Nonetheless, similar to the Canadian School's suggestions, which include strategies such as overt translation, collective authorship, and activist engagement, this approach includes disclosing the translator's context in the paratexts to highlight the risks of colonial readings and the opportunity to question the hostile elements of oppressive texts.¹³⁰ These paratexts also provide discursive spaces that reveal the agents involved in the translation process, such as editors and proofreaders, who influence the final translation, and in this way, the engagement with the translation and the framing of the source text is approached as an ethical praxis that makes the reader a more active and aware agent in the interaction.¹³¹

While the studies cited above provide valuable insights and a solid foundation, emerging approaches at the intersection of gender, sexuality, translation, and feminism call for deeper exploration of their interconnections and their (trans)national impact. The growing interest in Feminist Translation Studies and its transnational focus reflects a broader investment in transnational dialogues and the complexities of conveying feminist meaning across linguistic and cultural contexts. To advance this discussion, it is essential to examine translation practices closely. This thesis focuses on feminist literary texts that subvert patriarchal power dynamics, paying particular attention to the effects on their content and the formal strategies employed. These literary texts portray oppressed groups and articulate complex challenges to patriarchal hierarchies, elements that are especially susceptible to translation modulations that may dilute or reframe their feminist values. This vulnerability presents not only an ethical and political challenge for translators but also a compelling

¹²⁸ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 27.

¹²⁹ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 27.

¹³⁰ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 31.

¹³¹ Castro and Spoturno, 'Feminismos y traducción,' p. 31.

opportunity to trace how feminist content migrates globally through literary translation. Therefore, the objective of this thesis is clear: the analysis of subversive techniques to oppressive social power dynamics, offering diverse ontological lenses, in both source texts and translated texts, as linguistic and cultural specificity affect the rendering of the imaginary text, here comprehended as an inaccessible third dimension, which takes two or more forms, one for each text, and with an extended opportunity for interpretation and impact.

It is also important to contextualise the relevance of the source texts selected for this thesis, Clarice Lispector, Ali Smith, and Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, within the feminist literary framework. It is precisely their contributions to the feminine cultural genealogy which I argue positions them as ‘symbolic mothers and sisters’ in the reimagined lineage of women’s cultural contributions that have historically been silenced, a concept introduced by Pilar Godayol.¹³² Their writing often engages in a deliberate ‘mimicry’ of feminine roles within a patriarchal framework, and then subvert the power relations that traditionally position women in subordinate roles in a form of resistance, in some cases like *A Hora de Estrela* by criticising and revealing the flaws of the system, in others like *How to Be Both* offering alternate imaginings of historical gender resistance, and lastly, like in *La Virgen Cabeza* by challenging cis-heteronormative norms through empowerment. By doing so, they challenge the hierarchies built on notions of gender and sexual difference by asserting the humanity of their characters before their intersectional characteristics and thereby disrupting patriarchal norms that confine gender and sex identities.

In the context of these writers, characters who are confronted with the gender expectations associated with being ‘women’ resist these confines and assert their identities in ways that transcend conventional gender roles. These characters challenge patriarchal structures and present themselves instead as complex human beings with multifaceted identities. These figures serve as vital touchstones, providing guidance, influence, and reference points that help women writers transcend their historical marginalisation (in a

¹³² Pilar Godayol, ‘Three Feminist Classics in Catalan, Galician and Spanish: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Virginia Woolf and Betty Friedan,’ *Women’s Studies International Forum*, Rethinking Women and Translation in the Third Millennium, 42 (2014), pp. 77–86 (85), doi:[10.1016/j.wsif.2013.06.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.06.001).

sense, their historical orphanhood).¹³³ Examples of such ‘symbolic mothers’ as identified by Godayol include Betty Friedan and Virginia Woolf, whose works were among the first feminist texts from English-speaking contexts translated into Catalan, Galician, and Spanish.¹³⁴ These translations were crucial in introducing and reinforcing feminist perspectives in regions where such ideas had been less visible. Therefore, translating and highlighting the work of these ‘foreign symbolic feminine figures’ is essential, particularly when the feminist content has much potential for impact in the reader’s imaginary and recontextualisation of their symbolic orders. It is in this way then that the contribution of the translators featuring in this thesis, Giovanni Pontiero, Benjamin Moser, Dolors Udina i Abelló, and Frances Riddle, are of great relevance in the circulation and introduction of these subversive texts into new contexts. These contexts, in some cases, share similar struggles and potentially help articulate subversiveness within the context, as well as are culturally specific and introduce new power dynamics with the potential to reimagine and destabilise essentialist and universal approaches to identity, ultimately challenging cis-heteropatriarchal social structures.

In essence, language and discourse have a profound impact in shaping and challenging power systems, underscoring the relevance of translation in these dynamics. The cases here presented offer literary renditions of potential impact in both readers and their rendering of the source context struggles, here analysed as a spectrum of increased intersectional struggle. Most importantly, cultural specificity of both, source text but also of translated text, offer a paragon for analysis which in Translation Studies, are rarely analysed and presented with the sensitivity of discourse and power dynamics of this thesis. Each case, with its unique specificity, contribute to a wider perspective of global circulation of literature and the operations of translation within it as a tool for change, and for cultural understanding of both source and target contexts. As an overview of the case studies that follow this chapter, while intersectional in its consideration of class, the exploration of *A Hora da Estrela* primarily engages with more traditional binary gender constructs. This approach, though valuable, remains detached from the more specific and localised identities that Transnational Feminist

¹³³ Godayol, ‘Three feminist classics in Catalan, Galician and Spanish,’ p. 85.

¹³⁴ Godayol, ‘Three feminist classics in Catalan, Galician and Spanish,’ p. 85.

Translation seeks to foreground. As the thesis progresses, the focus will shift towards a more nuanced examination of minority identities, with Ali Smith's *How to Be Both*. This text, which includes a social transmasculine identity, provides a critical lens to explore how such identity has been represented and modulated in translation. Moving further, the analysis will turn to Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's *Virgen Cabeza*, which exemplifies the challenges and possibilities of translating highly localised identities, such as Cleopatra's label, that resist easy mapping onto Anglophone frameworks. In this way, the thesis transitions from analysing works that operate within more conventional gender binaries to those that engage with this binary in non-essentialist ways and finally to a work that openly empowers transnational and intersectional identities, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive understanding of current translation practices and the significance of incorporating feminist translation lenses.

3. *A Hora da Estrela/The Hour of the Star*

A Hora da Estrela is a novel that presents a tongue-in-cheek dynamic due to its layered disposition: a woman author writing as a man writing about a woman. This complexity, along with the increasing prominence of Clarice Lispector as a widely read and studied author makes *A Hora da Estrela* the most temporally distant work examined in this thesis. Accordingly, this first case study begins with an introduction to the author and the two translators, Giovanni Pontiero and Benjamin Moser. It also addresses a distinguishing feature of this section: the concept of retranslation. Unlike the other case studies, which each focus on a single translation, this section engages in a comparative analysis across three versions of the imaginary text, or in other words, the concept of *A Hora da Estrela*, and its collapse into three distinct textual versions. The analysis section then proceeds from paratextual elements to more metaphysical aspects such as the characters' ontology and power dynamics, and finally to the most linguistically technical: the syntax.

This chapter will explore the novel with a specific interest in the unequal power relations between the narrator, Rodrigo, and the protagonist, Macabéa, where language becomes a tool of power in which the existence of each exists uniquely through their translation into written word, a written word dominated by the narrator, and which subjugates the unaware protagonist. Moreover, the linguistic structures which Rodrigo is master of, encode gendered and social hierarchies, and by formulising the Rodrigo-Macabéa dyad, the novel dramatizes patriarchal dynamics. These are then subverted and challenged through both, an unusual writing style that insinuates the ontology of the 'other' within the text as an inaccessible dimension, and through its form, by the technical obliteration of the dyad revealing the phallacy of subjugation, in which those in patriarchal power, exercise power by subjugating. Therefore, the one in power becomes dependant on the power dynamic itself, limiting their capacities while also revealing the power within the subjugated role. In this way, the novel reveals how language is not only a site of domination but also an opportunity for resistance and liberation, and through a feminist psycholinguistic analysis, the chapter explores Lispector's destabilising linguistic authority to liberate the oppressed, in a dual way: technically through the actions and relations within the text, and formally through the writing form.

3.1 Clarice Lispector, Giovanni Pontiero, and Benjamin Moser, on the authors and (re)translation

Clarice Lispector (1920–1977) is a celebrated Brazilian author who has left a lasting impact on Brazilian literature and its global reach. Born in Ukraine, she immigrated to Brazil as an infant with her family due to the anti-Semitic violence stemming from WWI. Lispector is a diverse writer, excelling in novels, short stories, journalism, and translations. Surprisingly, her significant contributions as a translator, which include approximately 46 translations encompassing children’s literature, instruction manuals, adult literature, and theatre plays, among others, often go unnoticed in academic discussions.¹³⁵ However, regardless of the great significance and impact that Lispector has had on a national level, it was not until significantly later that her international relevance became increasingly evident. This may be partially due to, as Lenita Maria Rimoli Esteves’ argues, Brazilian literature’s lack of representation abroad due to the low population of Portuguese speakers in foreign countries, the peripheral position of Brazil in the international system of capital and culture, and the distance between Brazil and the countries considered to be from the ‘Global North,’ amongst other potential reasons.¹³⁶ To illustrate this matter Helosía Gonçalves Barbosa records a list of only 164 Brazilian works of fiction translated into English in 108 years (between 1886 and 1994).¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Maria Eduarda dos Santos Alencar and Rosvitha Friesen Blume, ‘Mulheres Traduzindo Literatura No Brasil Nos Séculos XIX e XX,’ *Ciência & Trópico*, 39.1 (2015), pp. 97–115 (108).

¹³⁶ Lenita Maria Rimoli Esteves, ‘A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior e a Importância Do Agenciamento: Uma Análise Guiada Por Conceitos Da Sociologia de Pierre Bourdieu,’ *O Eixo e a Roda: Revista de Literatura Brasileira*, 25.1 (2016), pp. 9–36 (11), doi:[10.17851/2358-9787.25.1.9-36](https://doi.org/10.17851/2358-9787.25.1.9-36).

¹³⁷ Heloísa Gonçalves Barbosa, ‘The Virtual Image: Brazilian Literature in English Translation’ (unpublished PhD, University of Warwick, 1994) <<http://webcat.warwick.ac.uk/record=b1417027~S1>> [accessed 12 August 2024], p. 18.

Barbosa's exploration of the trends of translation of Brazilian texts also notes that during the first decades of the 20th century, works of translation were being published in the UK and the US; however, after changes in the political and economic environment, most works began to be published targeting primarily the US market.¹³⁸ Some of the key changes that this shift include are the transition of the US into Brazil's primary trading partner, with the US's acquisition of one third of all Brazilian exports, as well as Brazil's sourcing of over one fourth of its imports from the US.¹³⁹ This growing economic relationship reflected a broader continental shift in influence from the UK to the US, particularly after WWI, which weakened UK's global role.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, the 1929 stock market crash led to a period of economic isolation for many Latin American countries, and it had a great impact on Brazil's trade and finances, reducing cultural exchanges with Europe and strengthening regional ties within the American continent.¹⁴¹ Within this context, Lispector's literary presence was particularly challenged as demonstrated by an anthology of Brazilian prose published in 1971 by the editorial *Ática*, where she was characterised as a 'difficult' author aimed at a limited audience that was not expected to reach the international popularity that other Brazilian authors had achieved such as Jorge Amado and Guimarães Rosa.¹⁴² Still, these predictions were eventually proved incorrect as Lispector has become one of the most widely read Brazilian authors in the English-speaking world.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Barbosa, 'The Virtual Image,' p. 43.

¹³⁹ Eric N. Baklanoff, 'External Factors in the Economic Development of Brazil's Heartland: The Center-South, 1850-1930,' in *The Shaping of Modern Brazil*, ed. by Eric N. Baklanoff, Colloquium on the Modernization of Brazil, Baton Rouge, LA (Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 19–35 (34).

¹⁴⁰ Barbosa, 'The Virtual Image,' p. 40.

¹⁴¹ Warren Dean, 'Economy,' in Leslie Bethell, *Brazil: Empire and Republic, 1822-1930* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 217–57 (253).

¹⁴² Esteves, 'A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,' pp. 24-5; with reference to: R. L. Scott-Buccluch and Mário Teles de Oliveira, *An Anthology of Brazilian Prose (from the Beginnings to the Present Day)* (Editôra *Ática*, 1971), p.328.

¹⁴³ Esteves, 'A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,' p. 25.

Lispector's eventual growth in the international sphere has been marked by the interest of French feminist groups, and most contended perhaps, the particular interest of Hélène Cixous. This has been documented by Maria Marta Laus Pereira through an analysis of the introduction of the author's work in France, disclosing the mechanisms and agents that framed Lispector through a feminist lens.¹⁴⁴ In this work, Pereira disseminates how Cixous related Lispector to her theorisation of *écriture féminine*, and this feminist framing was further crystallised by other agents, such as Giovanni Pontiero's description of Lispector as a 'must on all feminist reading lists.'¹⁴⁵ This relation to feminism has been a disputed argument as scholars have opposed this foreign perception of Lispector, such as Pereira, who states that Cixous' temperament and system of values filter the image of Lispector.¹⁴⁶ Other relevant scholars who have voiced their concern about this misappropriation are Carol Armsbruster and Mathieu Lindon.¹⁴⁷ Elena Carrera also expresses reservations while noting that Cixous has a non-academic character and does not directly cite the texts.¹⁴⁸ However, Esteves notes that regardless of the distortion of the image, this intervention brought readers and prestige to the author abroad.¹⁴⁹ Since this marked interest in Lispector as an author of feminist content, 'Lispector's work gained more prestige, more cultural capital, projecting the writer to international circles, and this may have motivated her first biography in

¹⁴⁴ This was done through Éditions de femmes, the magazine *Des femmes en mouvement*, and the intermediation of Hélène Cixous; as noted by Maria Marta Laus Pereira, 'Aspectos da recepção de Clarice Lispector na França,' *Anuário de Literatura*, 3.3 (1995), pp. 109–25 (120) <<https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/literatura/article/view/5282>> [accessed 20 September 2023].

¹⁴⁵ Esteves, 'A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,' p. 25; Giovanni Pontiero, *The Translator's Dialogue: Giovanni Pontiero*, ed. by Pilar Orero and Juan C. Sager (John Benjamins Publishing, 1997), p.19.

¹⁴⁶ Pereira, 'Aspectos da recepção de Clarice Lispector na França,' p. 121.

¹⁴⁷ Mathieu Lindon, 'Clarice Lispector: Mission Secrète,' *Libération*, 1989, pp. 21–22.; Carol Armsbruster, 'Hélène-Clarice: Nouvelle Voix,' *Contemporary Literature*, 24.2 (1983), pp. 145–57, doi:[10.2307/1208101](https://doi.org/10.2307/1208101); as referenced also by Pereira, 'Aspectos da recepção de Clarice Lispector na França,' p. 121.

¹⁴⁸ Elena Carrera, 'The Reception of Clarice Lispector via Hélène Cixous: Reading from the Whale's Belly,' in *Brazilian Feminisms*, ed. by Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira and Judith Still (University of Nottingham, 1999), pp. 85–100 (91).

¹⁴⁹ Esteves, 'A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,' p. 27.

English.¹⁵⁰ Ultimately, Lispector's framing has significantly influenced research internationally, emphasising explicitly feminist approaches, a focus shared by this project. An outcome of this international recognition, which has increased from the last decades of the 20th century and continued to establish itself in the early 21st century, has been the production of retranslations of her work. Among some of these retranslations is *The Hour of the Star*, first translated by Giovanni Pontiero in 1986 and later retranslated by Benjamin Moser in 2011.

Giovanni Pontiero, academic and scholar in Latin-American and Iberian Studies, and first translator of *A Hora da Estrela* into English (UK), published his translation in 1986. His work as a translator has been greatly celebrated as it significantly contributed to the introduction of Brazilian literature to English-speaking audiences. He is often described as a cultural ambassador driven by interests that scarcely surpass the personal field.¹⁵¹ Even Pontiero himself stated that financial gain was not a driving force behind his translations of Brazilian literature, as it did not provide a reliable source of income.¹⁵² Nevertheless, his contributions to the dissemination of Lispector's work are remarkable. In his lifetime, Pontiero was perceived as the most constant translator of Lispector into English, as he translated *Near to the Wild Heart*, *Family Ties*, *The Foreign Legion*, *Discovering the World*, and *The Hour of the Star*.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Source text: 'As obras de Lispector ganharam mais prestígio, mais capital cultural, projetando a escritora nos meios internacionais, e isso talvez tenha motivado a sua primeira biografia em inglês' [trans. by me]; Esteves, 'A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,' p. 27.

¹⁵¹ Esteves, 'A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,' p. 22.

¹⁵² Pontiero, *The Translator's Dialogue*, p. 18; 20-21.

¹⁵³ Esteves, 'A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,' p. 30. Pontiero's works: Clarice Lispector, *Near to the Wild Heart*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (New Directions, 1990); Clarice Lispector, *Family Ties*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (University of Texas Press, 1997); Clarice Lispector, *The Foreign Legion*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (New Directions, 1992); and Clarice Lispector, *Discovering the World*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (Carcenet, 1992).

The publisher in charge of Pontiero's *The Hour of the Star* was Carcanet Press.¹⁵⁴ Originally focused on poetry, short fiction, and art criticism, the press involves student and senior members from Oxford and Cambridge universities.¹⁵⁵ Because of this, Pontiero's translation appears to be originally geared toward an elite audience interested in modernist and poetic writing.¹⁵⁶ It is also worth noting that aside from Lispector, Pontiero also wrote translations of José Saramago's work. He had also received multiple awards including the Camões Prize for Translation (1968) for his translation of Lispector's short story 'Amor' and the Outstanding Translation Award (1994) from the American Literary Translator's Association for his translation of Saramago's *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*, among other prizes. His contributions have been celebrated across many medias, including his obituary, in which he is described as 'the ablest translator of 20th-century literature in Portuguese and one of its most ardent advocates.'¹⁵⁷ More specifically with regards to performance, Pontiero's translations of Lispector have been praised for their sensitivity in maintaining her style.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Pontiero was a Scots-Italian scholar and translator who graduated from the University of Glasgow and was granted his PhD at the Universidade Federal de Paraíba. Thereafter, he transitioned from lecturer to senior lecturer and, afterwards, to Reader in Latin-American Literature at the Victoria University of Manchester.

¹⁵⁵ 'Carcanet Press: About Us' <<https://www.carcanet.co.uk/cgi-bin/subscribe?showinfo=ip020>> [accessed 7 December 2023].

¹⁵⁶ Misha Campello Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela: Exploring the Potential of Feminist Translation to Inform Research in Clarice Lispector's Novel.', *Transcultural Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5.1 (2024), pp. 65–78 (p. 66), doi:[10.21608/tjhss.2024.255717.1226](https://doi.org/10.21608/tjhss.2024.255717.1226).

¹⁵⁷ Nigel Griffin, 'Obituary: Giovanni Pontiero', *The Independent*, 11 March 1996 <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-giovanni-pontiero-1341546.html>> [accessed 11 February 2022]; For more appreciation of Pontiero's translations see also: Esteves, Lenita Maria Rimoli, 'Uma Discussão Sobre a Prática da Retradução com Base no Caso das Republicações de Obras de Clarice Lispector no Exterior', *Trabalhos em Linguística Aplicada*, 55 (2016), pp. 651–76 (652), doi:[10.1590/010318138647117214021](https://doi.org/10.1590/010318138647117214021)

¹⁵⁸ Robyn Marsack, 'Discovering the Word', in Giovanni Pontiero, *The Translator's Dialogue: Giovanni Pontiero*, ed. by Pilar Orero and Juan C. Sager (John Benjamins Publishing, 1997), pp. 99–106 (99).

Nearly twenty years later, in 2011, Benjamin Moser, an American writer and translator, published the second translation of *A Hora da Estrela*.¹⁵⁹ Moser's translation was published by New Directions, an American press founded by James Laughlin following Ezra Pound's 'career advice' and heavily interested in avant-garde art.¹⁶⁰ Thereafter, because of his published biography of Lispector, *Why This World*, Moser became the Series Editor of an ongoing project at New Directions aiming to translate the complete works of Lispector into English. Moser has significantly been celebrated for his work as a biographer, editor, and translator of Lispector. For instance, the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations awarded him the Prize for Cultural Diplomacy in 2016.¹⁶¹ In 2021, he was elected to one of the twenty chairs reserved for foreigners at the Brazilian Academy of Letters, among other achievements.¹⁶² A relevant dissonance comes to attention when comparing Moser's ethos shared in interviews with the scholarly depiction of the translator. He has discussed his desire to approach translation through the Latin origin of the word ('bridging across') instead of from a marketing perspective, an approach that had to be negotiated due to the constraints of the capitalist market, and the lack of an established readership in the target culture.¹⁶³ Still, Moser describes Lispector as a 'UNESCO monument' and even compares her to a 'patrimony of all humanity,' highlighting his personal investment in the author's literary work.¹⁶⁴ In contrast to this, academic discussions consistently depict Moser's contributions

¹⁵⁹ Benjamin Moser graduated in History from Brown University, and later was awarded a M.A. and a Ph.D. from the Utrecht University.

¹⁶⁰ 'New Directions Publishing: About Us' <<https://www.ndbooks.com/about/>> [accessed 7 December 2023].

¹⁶¹ '01/07/2016 - Americano Que Biografou Clarice Recebe Prêmio Itamaraty de Diplomacia Cultural', *Revista Museu: Cultura Levada a Sério*, n.d. <<https://www.revistamuseu.com.br/site/br/noticias/nacionais/695-01-07-2016-americano-que-biografou-clarice-recebe-premio-itamaraty-de-diplomacia-cultural.html>> [accessed 13 August 2024].

¹⁶² 'Brazilian Academy of Letters | Academic Society | Britannica,' *Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Brazilian-Academy-of-Letters>> [accessed 13 August 2024].

¹⁶³ Scott Esposito, 'Passionate Acolytes: An Interview with Benjamin Moser', 17 August 2015 <<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/08/17/passionate-acolytes-an-interview-with-benjamin-moser/>> [accessed 15 February 2022].

¹⁶⁴ Esposito, *Passionate Acolytes*.

as markedly commercial, with a tendency to compare both translators by highlighting Pontiero's personal approach and Moser's professional investment, instead of regarding them as separate professionals, and so, they are entangled through their translations.¹⁶⁵

The relation between the translations becomes relevant in understanding their internal operations, as Pontiero's *The Hour of the Star* first introduced the story to English-speaking readers, primarily within the UK, and later, Moser retranslated the novel, benefiting from an established readership, and orienting his translation for a US audience. The idea of retranslating a work that has already been translated is often seen as necessary due to the increasing need to update the language and context of the first translation for historical reasons.¹⁶⁶ In this cycle of retranslations, Antoine Berman argues that there are two times and spaces of translation; a first translation that presents the target culture of the source text (following Goethe's first *Arten*, and here exemplified by Pontiero's *The Hour of the Star*), and a second translation that would attempt to 'reproduce' in a 'closer' way the source text and language (such as Moser's).¹⁶⁷ This suggests that the first translation further adjusts the source text under cultural and editorial considerations to create a commercially viable translation when compared to the retranslation.¹⁶⁸ However, Berman's argument simplifies the complexity and specificity of retranslations, since retranslations do not necessarily

¹⁶⁵ Esteves, 'Uma Discussão Sobre a Prática da Retradução,' pp. 672-3.

¹⁶⁶ Elizabeth Lowe, 'Revisiting Re-Translation: Re-Creation and Historical Re-Vision,' in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. by Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter, 1st edn (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), pp. 413–24 (426), doi:[10.1002/9781118613504](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118613504).

This notion is challenged by Mauri Furlan's concept of the 'text-translation,' originally proposed by Henri Meschonnic. This concept suggests that a 'text-translation' is a translation that coexists with the source text, achieving a kind of timelessness that transcends eras and ideologies (that is, it evidences suprahistorical and supraideological values), which is a notion worth exploring in research on a theoretical level, but not central to the focus of this thesis. Mauri Furlan, 'Retraduzir é preciso', *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 13 (August 2013), pp. 284–94 (290), art. 13, doi:[10.5007/%2525x](https://doi.org/10.5007/%2525x).

¹⁶⁷ Antoine Berman, *La traduction et la lettre, ou, L'auberge du lointain* (Éditions du Seuil, 1999), p. 10; also referenced in John Milton and Marie-Hélène Catherine Torres, 'Apresentação,' *Cadernos de Tradução*, 1.11 (2003), pp. 9–17 (10), doi:[10.5007/%x](https://doi.org/10.5007/%x).

¹⁶⁸ Yves Gambier, 'La retraduction, retour et détour,' *Meta: journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 39.3 (1994), pp. 413–17 (414), doi:[10.7202/002799ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/002799ar).

improve the first translation nor act source-text-oriented, as in some cases, there is a tide-like activity in which advances and retreats take place between target language-oriented translations and source language-oriented ones.¹⁶⁹ Retranslations do not necessarily operate within a binary spectrum; rather, they may resist the neat taxonomies of being ‘more source-text-oriented’ and ‘more target-context-oriented.’ Instead, the understanding of retranslations can be queerer by observing how retranslations play with form, adapt to target markets, respond to the purposes of the translation, among many aspects that demonstrate the many directions they may take and which complicate a theorisation of retranslation cycles.

Yves Gambier also notes that Berman’s hypothesis sustains the flawed assumption that a source text contains immutable content, meaning that its content does not change depending on the reading.¹⁷⁰ This assumption has been contested by scholars like Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, who have specifically argued that textual meaning is not fixed but constructed through interpretation, thereby rejecting the authority of the author as the sole source of meaning.¹⁷¹ One reason offered to demonstrate this is how multiple translations of the same text can produce different meanings, while their respective closeness to the source text is uncertain.¹⁷² As Esteves notes, this is a logocentric approach which does not consider the fact that retranslation is an act of indirect return to the source text, in which a period of assimilation following the first translation is required to deem the need for a retranslation to happen.¹⁷³ In support of this, Gambier agrees with Berman’s idea that a target culture can gradually and progressively accept foreign literary forms.¹⁷⁴ As demonstrated by

¹⁶⁹ Milton and Torres, ‘Apresentação,’ p. 10.

¹⁷⁰ Gambier, ‘La retraduction, retour et détour,’ pp. 414-5.

¹⁷¹ Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author,’ in Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath, Fontana Communications Series (Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142–48; Michel Foucault, ‘What Is an Author?’, in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 113–38.

¹⁷² Gambier, ‘La retraduction, retour et détour,’ pp. 414-5.

¹⁷³ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 659.

¹⁷⁴ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 660.

Milton and Torres, as well as other case studies such as Isabelle Desmidt's study of a Swedish children's classic, the hypothesis of an 'immortal' translation does not apply and yet may still be valid, in some cases and to a certain extent, if not formulated in absolute terms.¹⁷⁵ This understanding is central in Sharon Deane-Cox's *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation*, where she challenges that retranslation is consistently a progression oriented towards the source, but is instead historically contingent and shaped by cultural, literary, and ideological situatedness.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, retranslations do not have to be formally closer to a source text, but as Esteves notes, they tend to do so due to the target culture's gradual ability to accept foreign forms of literary expression.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, Lowe adds that one of the agents promoting new translations is the figure of the editor, who may consider a translation outdated or inadequate for the current demand.¹⁷⁸

Thus, existing translations may not necessarily contain specific errors, but they may exhibit outdated language or fail to capture the source author's unique style, which is relevant to the reasoning for Moser's retranslation.¹⁷⁹ In an interview, he explained that due to the translators' different voices and styles, the presence of Lispector in the Anglophone sphere was characterised by a marked polyphony.¹⁸⁰ When approaching the ongoing project with New Directions, Moser defends that his ultimate purpose is to unify this polyphonic quality of translations in English of Lispector's work into a singular or more central style.¹⁸¹ He aims explicitly to preserve Lispector's syntax and 'protect' what he calls the cacophony of her unique Portuguese style.¹⁸² For this reason, he particularly criticises Pontiero's translation for 'correcting' Lispector's intentionally odd syntax and punctuation,

¹⁷⁵ Esteves, 'Uma discussão,' p. 660.

¹⁷⁶ Sharon Deane-Cox, *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

¹⁷⁷ Esteves, 'Uma discussão,' p. 660.

¹⁷⁸ Lowe, 'Revisiting Re-translation,' p. 415.

¹⁷⁹ Esteves, 'Uma discussão,' p. 654.

¹⁸⁰ Esposito, 'Passionate Acolytes,' s.d.

¹⁸¹ Esteves, 'Uma discussão,' p. 656.

¹⁸² Esposito, 'Passionate Acolytes,' s.d.

highlighting that his translation ‘respects’ her style in order to create a prose that ‘better’ portrays Lispector’s voice.¹⁸³ However, it is relevant to note that the idea of a ‘unique’ voice for Lispector in another language is an impossible quest, given the multiplicity of meanings and the inherent permutations that translations can afford. This perspective can undermine the value of having multiple translator voices, each offering a unique interpretation of Lispector’s work.

Language and culture are constantly evolving, as noted by the theories surrounding retranslation, providing opportunities for Lispector’s writing to be renewed with each translation. Moser’s approach may stem from a desire for a definitive interpretation of Lispector, but it overlooks the fact that a translation is not the source text. Each translation is a creative and linguistic achievement that deserves recognition on its own, as it collapses the entangled system between the texts into a different yet tightly interconnected text. The possibility of multiple translations of Lispector’s work in English not only exists but has become a reality largely due to the efforts of Pontiero and Moser. More specifically in the case of Moser, as Lenita notes, the translator has been a central agent for the production of retranslations since he edited four translations from Lispector’s work, retranslated *The Hour of the Star*, prefaced *Água viva* and wrote, in partnership with Pedro Almodóvar, an introduction to *A Breath of Life*.¹⁸⁴ Following Moser’s editing, New Directions published a collection of 85 of Lispector’s short stories translated by Katrina Dodson in 2015.¹⁸⁵ This project aims to consolidate Lispector’s voice in English, capturing her distinctive style while laying the groundwork that will most probably facilitate future retranslations.

¹⁸³ Benjamin Moser, ‘Brazil’s Clarice Lispector Gets a Second Chance in English’, *Publishing Perspectives*, 2 December 2011 <<https://publishingperspectives.com/2011/12/brazil-claire-lispector-second-chance-in-english/>> [accessed 29 September 2022]; Clarice Lispector, *Água Viva*, ed. by Benjamin Moser, trans. by Stefan Tobler, Modern Classics (Penguin Classics, 2014); and Clarice Lispector and Pedro Almodóvar, *A Breath of Life (Pulsations)*, ed. by Benjamin Moser, trans. by Johnny Lorenz, A New Directions Book (New Directions, 2012).

¹⁸⁴ Esteves, ‘A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,’ p. 30.

¹⁸⁵ Esteves, ‘A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior,’ p. 30.

Due to this approach, Moser's *The Hour of the Star* attempts to be an 'Epoche,' the closest possible translation to the source text. Yet, as it will be analysed later, the foreignness of the source text is not fully captured, an impossible endeavour due to the uniqueness of each language and their cultural difference. As Esteve concludes, Moser's translation is closer to Lispector's source text (source-text-oriented), whereas Pontiero's translation further accommodates the Portuguese text to the conventions for its reception in the target culture (target-context-oriented).¹⁸⁶ Still, what has not been yet closely analysed is how these translations have rendered Lispector's subversion of patriarchal structures and how their choices affect the reader's experience and understanding of the exploration of identity. Hence, the following analysis will consider how their texts, understood as products not only formed by the translators but with the influence of other agents involved, render Lispector's novel to English-speaking readers.

3.2 A Hora da Estrela and The Hour of the Star: A Comparative Analysis

Lispector stands out as a distinctive writer in Brazil who departed from the regionalist traditions of her time and did not subscribe to the idea of the 'intellectual.' In this context, the term 'intellectual' refers to individuals of the time who focused on social activism and political commentary, often distanced from popular culture.¹⁸⁷ This is relevant due to Lispector's deliberate avoidance of this label and objective, choosing instead to empathetically engage with popular culture, as evidenced in *A Hora da Estrela*. Within the novel, she depicts the struggles of a north-eastern young woman (Macabéa) living in poverty in Rio de Janeiro. The narrative does not develop any grand political commentary that relates

¹⁸⁶ Esteves, 'Uma discussão,' p. 671.

¹⁸⁷ Rony Márcio Cardoso Ferreira, 'A Hora Do Brasil De 70,' *Travessias*, 2.1 (2008), pp. 1–8 (3-4); Aurielle Gomes dos Santos and Danielle Dayse Marques de Lima, 'Sobre A Sexualidade Feminina Em Charlotte Brontë e Clarice Lispector,' *Macabéa - Revista Eletrônica do Netlli*, 9.4 (2020), pp. 686–97 (688), doi:[10.47295/mren.v9i4.2543](https://doi.org/10.47295/mren.v9i4.2543).

to the military dictatorship of the time. Instead, the focus is placed on the reality of living in poverty and the everyday life of a vast majority of people in Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, Lispector further differentiated herself from her peers through her subversion of standardised language, as she developed an experimental writing style that remains uncharted even now.¹⁸⁸ Her writing commonly includes truncated syntax, erratic reasoning, and unusual word choices, all of which highlight how challenging it is for a translator to reproduce in another linguistic context. In other words, the deliberate subversions of syntax, the unusual word choices, and the layers of ambiguity are especially challenging because the translation may attempt to reproduce this disruption in a language that operates differently and demands other techniques. The following section of this chapter will provide a detailed analysis of Lispector's writing style in *A Hora da Estrela*, and its negotiation in both translations, with particular emphasis to strategies of patriarchal subversion at the levels of form and language.

Paratexts: Looking Around

Paratextuality, which refers to the materials framing, surrounding, and informing the central text, such as the title's presentation, author's name, and other textual thresholds, has a great impact in informing the understanding of the work.¹⁸⁹ These paratextual elements can vary significantly between different editions and even more so between the source text and its translations, which are particularly relevant in the case of *A Hora da Estrela* due to Lispector's metatextual play in the paratexts. For example, in the case of *A Hora da Estrela* and both *The Hour of the Star*, variations occur in the placement and presentation of the title, author's name, page numbers, footnotes, and other paratextual elements. Therefore, it is unsurprising that one of the first noticeable differences between the texts is the order in which information is presented before the novel begins. For instance, Pontiero's and Moser's

¹⁸⁸ Santos and Lima, 'Sobre A Sexualidade Feminina,' p.688.

¹⁸⁹ Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

translations present the list of titles after the author's dedication, reversing the order found in the source text:

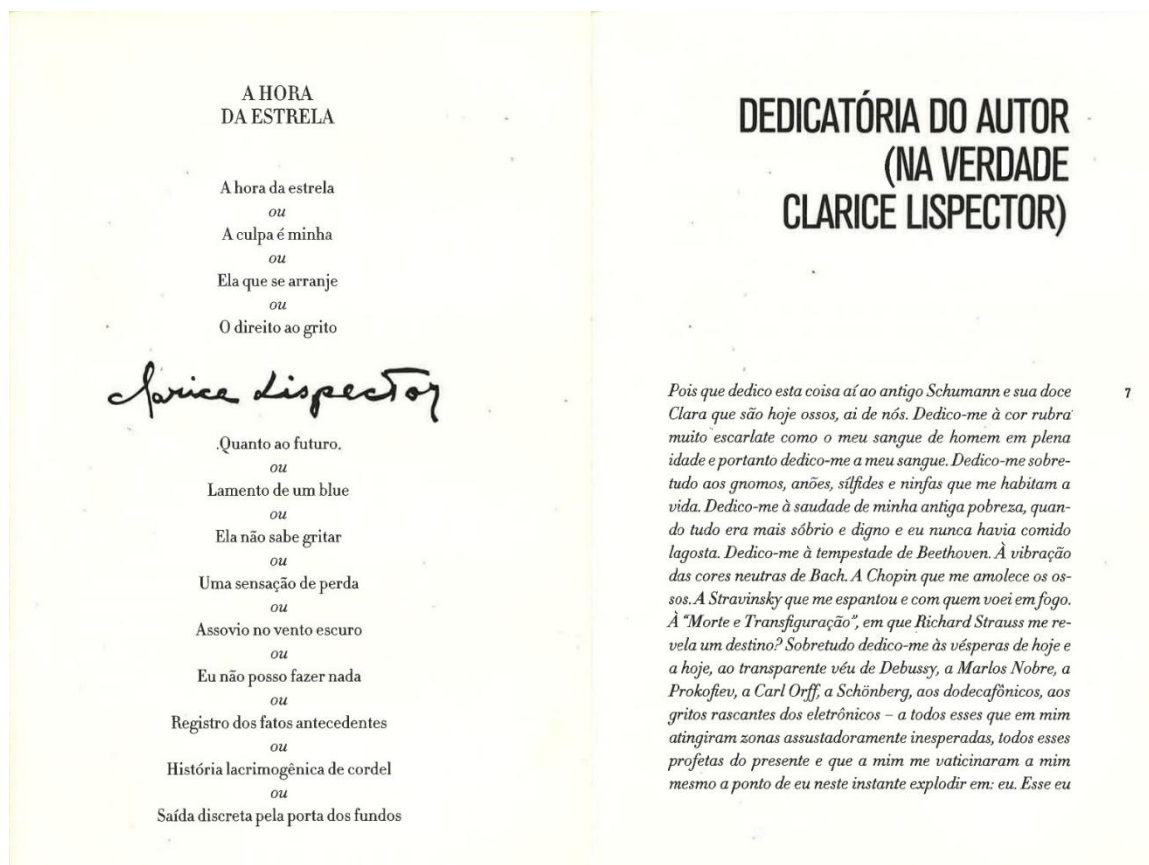


Figure 1. Scan from Clarice Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 5 and 7. It shows the order in which paratexts are presented beginning with the list of titles, including the author's signature, and followed by the author's dedication.

The Author's Dedication
(alias Clarice Lispector)

I DEDICATE this narrative to dear old Schumann and his beloved Clara who are now, alas, nothing but dust and ashes. I dedicate it to the deep crimson of my blood as someone in his prime. I dedicate it, above all, to those gnomes, dwarfs, sylphs, and nymphs who inhabit my life. I dedicate it to the memory of my years of hardship when everything was more austere and honourable, and I had never eaten lobster. I dedicate it to the tempest of Beethoven. To the vibrations of Bach's neutral colours. To Chopin who leaves me weak. To Stravinsky who terrifies me and makes me soar in flames. To *Death and Transfiguration*, in which Richard Strauss predicts my fate. Most of all, I dedicate it to the day's vigil and to day itself, to the transparent voice of

7

Debussy, to Marlos Nobre, to Prokofiev, to Carl Orff and Schoenberg, to the twelve-tone composers, to the strident notes of an electronic generation — to all those musicians who have touched within me the most alarming and unsuspected regions; to all those prophets of our age who have revealed me to myself and made me explode into me. This me that is you, for I cannot bear to be simply me, I need others in order to stand up, giddy and awkward as I am, for what can one do except meditate in order to plunge into that total void which can only be attained through meditation. Meditation need not bear fruit: meditation can be an end in itself. I meditate without words or themes. What troubles my existence is writing.

And we must never forget that if the atom's structure is invisible, it is none the less real. I am aware of the existence of many things I have never seen. And you too. One cannot prove the existence of what is most real but the essential thing is to believe. To weep and believe. This story unfolds in a state of emergency and public calamity. It is an unfinished book because it offers no answer. An answer I hope someone somewhere in the world may be able to provide. You perhaps? It is a story in technicolour to add a touch of luxury, for heaven knows, I need that too. Amen for all of us.

8

THE HOUR
OF THE STAR

The Blame is Mine
or
The Hour of the Star
or
Let Her Fend for Herself
or
The Right to Protest
Clarice Lispector
As for the Future.
or
Singing the Blues
or
She Doesn't Know How to Protest
or
A Sense of Loss
or
Whistling in the Dark Wind
or
I Can Do Nothing
or
A Record of Preceding Events
or
A Tearful Tale
or
A Discreet Exit by the Back Door

9

Figure 2. Scan from Clarice Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero (Manchester: Carcanet Pres, 1986), pp. 7-9. It shows the order in which paratexts are presented: first the author's dedication followed by the list of titles, which includes the author's signature.

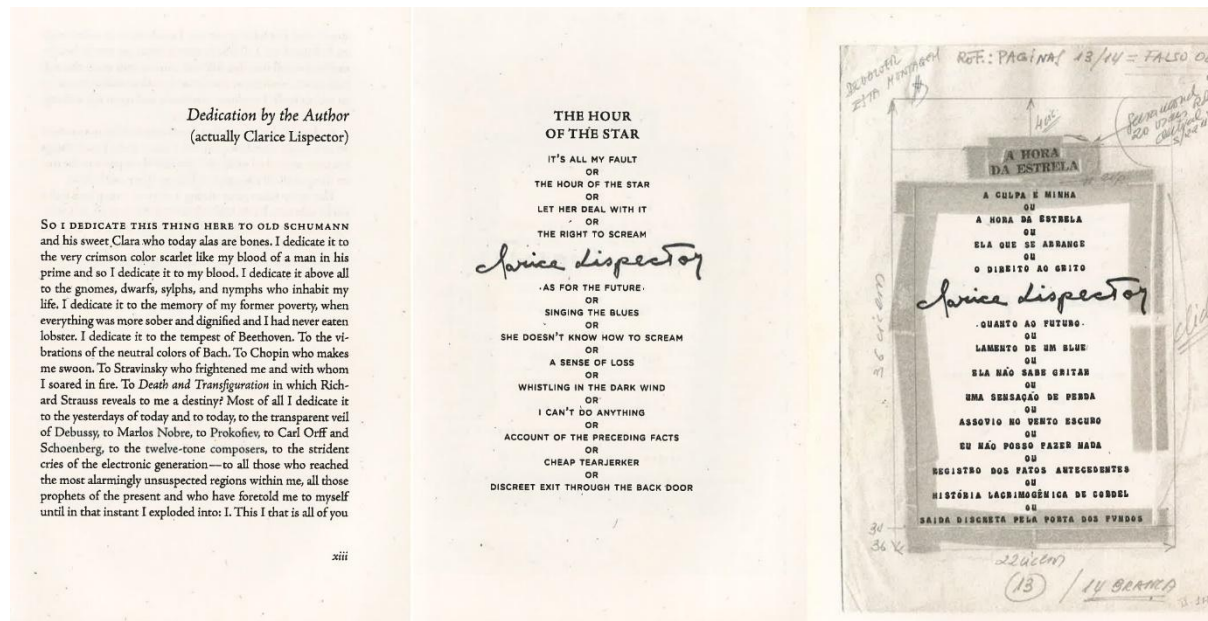


Figure 3. Scan from Lispector, *Clarice, The Hour of the Star*, trans. by Benjamin Moser (Penguin Books, 2014), pp. xiii-xv. It shows the order in which paratexts are

presented, including the author's dedication, a list of titles, and a scan of the list of titles in Portuguese.

As shown in Figure 2, Moser's text offers the list of titles followed by a scan of the source text's editorial draft, displaying how the titles were initially intended to appear in Portuguese. His version also includes an introductory essay by Colm Tóibín, titled 'A Passion for the Void,' which is unique to his translation and is potentially the reason why this version features a table of contents, all presented before the scans here presented. This reversal of paratextual elements in the translations in English appears to align with the conventions expected by English-speaking audiences. The inclusion of the editorial draft in Moser's version further reflects his intention to closely replicate Lispector's work by directly invoking the source text. While deviations from the source text's publishing conventions, such as the order in which the paratexts are presented are common in translation, they result in a distinctly different experience for the reader. A consistent difference is that Moser's version introduces further paratextuality to shape the reader's lens when approaching the text, while also including a scan from the source text's list of titles to tangibly approximate the version to its source. This creates a complex construct that brings attention to the translation as an artifact, or in other words, in points to its visibility. Hence, by treating the source text as a cultural artefact, Moser elevates it by adding supplementary information and providing an introduction that both distances the translation from the source text while also closing on it, raising further awareness of the fact that the reader is, in fact, reading a translation.

In terms of linguistic translation choices, a significant difference arises in the translation of the author's dedication. Pontiero's translation uses the word 'alias,' which suggests that Clarice Lispector is a pseudonym, or a fictitious name chosen by the author. This choice introduces a layer of ambiguity, implying that the author in the text is a constructed identity, an alias rather than a real person. In contrast, Moser's translation opts for the word 'actually,' which conveys a stronger sense of authenticity and truth. It suggests that the author truly is Clarice Lispector, emphasising a factual identity rather than a constructed one. This choice aligns more closely with the source in Portuguese's phrase 'na verdade,' which also asserts a fact or reality. This invites interpretations that view the

narrative as more self-reflective or metafictional, where the boundaries between the author, narrator, and character are blurred. Moser's use of 'actually' reinforces the idea of the author as a real, tangible presence, grounding the narrative in a more straightforward reality. In this way, Moser's broader approach becomes evident early on, as it brings readers closer to Lispector's work by emphasising its directness and immediacy. Lispector's use of 'na verdade' operates as a narrative device that intentionally separates the author from the narrator. As Rony Márcio Cardoso Ferreira and Edgar César Nolasco argue, 'na verdade' functions as a deliberate act of distancing, allowing Lispector to avoid full accountability for the novel's content.¹⁹⁰

Following with the relevant paratextuality are the multiple titles of the novel. Before the narrative begins, 14 titles appear as paratextual devices along with Lispector's signature, which can also be interpreted as an additional title. Because of this, Lispector subverts the idea that a novel must have a single, definitive title that encapsulates its meaning. Instead, she presents the reader with a range of possibilities, each of which could frame the story in a different light. This list of titles plays a crucial role in reinforcing the narrative, as the titles (re)appear throughout the novel, creating a dynamic interplay best described as an echoing effect. The titles not only foreshadow the major events and themes of the novel in an enigmatic manner but also contribute to a layered, holographic structure where *A Hora da Estrela* becomes synonymous with *A culpa é minha*, *Ela que se arranje*, *O direito ao grito*, and so on. The titles are not just names but commentaries on the narrative, hinting at various thematic elements, emotional tones, and narrative possibilities. This self-reflexive gesture is typical of Lispector's style, where the boundary between the text and the act of writing is often blurred. Thus, the novel resists being confined to a single title, embracing a multiplicity of identities and meanings:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
A HORA DA ESTRELA A hora da estrela <i>ou</i>	THE HOUR OF THE STAR The Blame is Mine or	THE HOUR OF THE STAR IT'S ALL MY FAULT OR

¹⁹⁰ Ferreira, 'A Hora Do Brasil De 70,' p.5.

A culpa é minha <i>ou</i>	The Hour of the Star or	THE HOUR OF THE STAR OR
Ela que se arranje <i>ou</i>	Let Her Fend for Herself or	LET HER DEAL WITH IT OR
O direito ao grito <i>ou</i>	The Right to Protest or	THE RIGHT TO SCREAM [Clarice Lispector's signature]
[Clarice Lispector's signature] .Quanto ao futuro. <i>ou</i>	[Clarice Lispector's signature] .As For the Future. or	.AS FOR THE FUTURE. OR
Lamento de um blue <i>ou</i>	Singing the Blues or	SINGING THE BLUES OR
Ela não sabe gritar <i>ou</i>	She Doesn't Know How to Protest or	SHE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO SCREAM OR
Uma sensação de perda <i>ou</i>	A Sense of Loss or	A SENSE OF LOSS OR
Assovio no vento escuro <i>ou</i>	Whistling in the Dark Wind or	WHISTLING IN THE DARK WIND OR
Eu não posso fazer nada <i>ou</i>	I can Do Nothing or	I CAN'T DO ANYTHING OR
Registro dos fatos antecedentes <i>ou</i>	A Record of Preceding Events or	ACCOUNT OF THE PRECEDING FACTS OR
História lacrimogênica decordel <i>ou</i>	A Tearful Tale or	CHEAP TEARJERKER OR
Saída discreta pela porta dos fundos ¹⁹¹	A Discreet Exit by the Back Door ¹⁹²	DISCREET EXIT THROUGH THE BACK DOOR ¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 5.

¹⁹² Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 9.

¹⁹³ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 1.

Some modulations within these titles are worth observing due to their different effects. As noted before, these titles emerge in the narrative explicitly in an echoing effect, which showcases their relevance when in title form while paired with their narrative appearance. For instance, the titles ‘O direito ao grito’ and ‘Ela não sabe gritar’ are echoed in Rodrigo’s narrative when: ‘Porque há o direito ao grito. / Então eu grito.’¹⁹⁴ Moser’s translation captures this with a literal approach: ‘Because there’s the right to scream. / so I scream.’¹⁹⁵ This translation reinforces the strong connection between the list of titles and their placement within the narrative, allowing the reader to consciously recall the title or subconsciously experience a sense of familiarity, contributing to an uncanny effect. However, this resonance is undermined in Pontiero’s version, where the translation reads: ‘For one has the right to shout. / So I am shouting.’¹⁹⁶ This translation choice does not create the echoing effect of the title list by not implementing the verb ‘to protest,’ which would mimic Pontiero’s choice of translation in ‘The Right to Protest’ and ‘She Doesn’t Know How to Protest.’ As a result, Lispector’s deliberate echo chamber of themes becomes less effective in Pontiero’s version, where some titles fail to reverberate throughout the narrative. Albeit screaming in this context indeed refers to the act of protesting, it also relates to the recurring theme of Macabéa’s silence, which is explored later in this chapter, but is here signalled in contrast to Rodrigo’s right to scream, and as such, these thematic relations are missed in Pontiero’s versions.

Although these thematic relations are undermined, Pontiero’s translation provides a more guided experience in which the right to scream is taken into the political sphere. By opting for ‘protesting’ instead of ‘screaming,’ Pontiero’s translation explicitly connects the title and its thematic dimension. In this way, he has decided that ‘to scream’ in the context of *A Hora da Estrela* is related to socio-political assertion and self-expression. As such, ‘She’ (Macabéa) explicitly does not know how to, and said right is reserved for Rodrigo. The result is a more digested text that facilitates the contents of the source text more immediately for the target audience. As previously introduced, this audience was new to the

¹⁹⁴ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 11.

¹⁹⁵ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 5. Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, pp. 13-4.

¹⁹⁶ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, pp. 13-4.

author and thus warranted Pontiero's interest in adapting the text in an accessible way, intervening at times such as this one by collapsing the ambiguity of *Lispector* into a digestible meaning. In other words, this translation demonstrates clear patterns of adaptation and interpretation that modulate the content in a specific direction to facilitate the reading of the text. This has presented some opportunities for new thematic and explicit relations, such as Pontiero's use of 'protest' being recalled within the narrative: 'Few of them ever complain, and as far as I know, they never protest, for there is no one to listen.'¹⁹⁷

Therefore, Pontiero's translation here intervenes and heightens the intertextuality of the novel, contextualising the act of protesting and how it is a useless option for northeastern girls such as Macabéa. It creates a new connection between the titles presented themes and the narrative, which does not exist in the source text. In Moser's translation, this segment retains the ambiguity of the source text: 'Few protest, and as far as I know, they never complain since they don't know to whom.'¹⁹⁸ A notable difference between the passages is found in the second segment. In Pontiero's text, the girls refrain from protesting because no one will listen to them, demonstrating their ability to protest but their ineffectiveness in advocating for their cause and/or the clear rejection from other groups to implement change for their cause. This contradicts the title's suggestion that they do not know how to protest. Because of this contradiction, this potential new connection is undermined and suggests that it is not an active choice, yet it still presents a relevant opportunity. Another difference in effect takes place in the use of the title: '.As for the Future.,' '.AS FOR THE FUTURE.,' and '.Quanto ao futuro.'¹⁹⁹ Notably, significant variations emerge in both Anglophone translations when this alternative title is integrated into the narrative to reinforce the previously discussed echoing effect:

¹⁹⁷ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 14.

¹⁹⁸ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 6.

¹⁹⁹ *Lispector, A Hora da Estrela*, p. 5; Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 9; Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 1.

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
<p>História exterior e explícita, sim, mas que contém segredos – a começar por um dos títulos, “Quanto ao futuro.”, que é precedido por um ponto final e seguido de outro ponto final. Não se trata de capricho meu ‘ no fim talvez se entenda a necessidade do delimitado. (Mal e mal vislumbro o final que, se minha pobreza permitir, quero que seja grandioso.) Se em vez de pronto fosse seguido por reticências o título ficaria aberto a possíveis imaginações vossas, porventura até malsãs a sem piedade.²⁰⁰</p>	<p>A story that is patently open and explicit yet holds certain secrets – starting with one of the book’s titles ‘As For The Future,’ preceded and followed by a full stop. This is no caprice on my part – hopefully this need for confinement will ultimately become clear. (The ending is still so vague yet, were my poverty to permit, I should like it to be grandiose.) If, instead of a full stop, the title were followed by dotted lines, it would remain open to every kind of speculation on your part, however morbid or pitiless.²⁰¹</p>	<p>An exterior and explicit story, yes, but which contains secrets – starting with one of the titles, “As For The Future”, which is preceded by a period and followed by another period. This isn’t just a notion of mine – at the end perhaps you’ll understand the need to delimit. (I’m barely starting to make out the ending which, my poverty permitting, I’d like to be grandiose.) If instead of a period it were followed by ellipses, the title would be open to possible imaginings of yours, perhaps even depraved and pitiless.²⁰²</p>

Lispector’s exploration of boundaries and ideas of self-definition is widely acknowledged across her chronicles, novels, and also debated in scholarly work. As this excerpt

²⁰⁰ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 10.

²⁰¹ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 13.

²⁰² Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 5.

demonstrates, Lispector's writing explicitly addresses the unbalanced power relations between the novel and the readers. This topic of concern is also explored by the author through the opposite effect in her chronicle *Machine Writing*, where she proposed publishing a chronicle composed of a blank page, allowing readers to project their interpretations freely.²⁰³ This dynamic of using 'the other' as a canvas for reader projection is central to *A Hora da Estrela*, yet here, Rodrigo explicitly prevents such projections by imposing full stops around the title.²⁰⁴ Although both translations retain the full stops around the title in the list of titles, they fail to maintain this consistency when the title reappears within the novel. One might speculate that removing full stops in both translations adheres to traditional conventions in the target cultures, despite Moser's expressed commitment to preserving Lispector's style.²⁰⁵ This variation subverts the source text's intention of restricting the reader's projections onto the novel and its title.²⁰⁶ In translation, the title is presented without the full stops but still accompanied by the explanation for their presence, offering readers the opportunity to wonder, project, and question that which Rodrigo/Lispector limited in the source text.²⁰⁷ This alteration turns the full stops into a metaphorical device that loses its in-text visual representation while retaining its explanatory purpose, engaging the reader's imagination in new ways. By not giving these signs a 'body,' the source's effect is lost in translation, creating a unique and divergent experience for the reader. This shift disrupts the boundaries established by the source, offering rhetorical space for projection and imagination, akin to the blank page in Lispector's chronicle.

²⁰³ Lispector, *A Descoberta Do Mundo*, p. 494.

²⁰⁴ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 74.

²⁰⁵ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 75.

²⁰⁶ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 75.

²⁰⁷ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 75.

The Narrator-Protagonist Dyad: Rodrigo's Ontology

Lispector's manipulation of textual boundaries illustrates her ongoing interrogation of who controls meaning in the act of writing and reading. This concern with power and projection is also projected in her portrayal of Rodrigo's patriarchal attitudes: 'um outro escritor, sim, mas teria que ser homem porque escritora mulher poderia lacrimejar piegas.'²⁰⁸ By imposing a traditional masculine narrator aligned with the Brazilian literary canon of the time, Lispector portrays in her narrative the limits and characteristics of masculine writing. Masculine writing, associated with Cartesian and phallogocentric beliefs, is understood here as a mode of writing that claims to depict 'reality' through 'reason,' both great topics of interest for the narrator.²⁰⁹ Still, this portrayal of the intellectual is subverted within the novel:

	Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Section A	Eu não sou um intelectual	In no sense an intellectual, I write with my body²¹¹	I am not an intellectual, I write with my body²¹²

²⁰⁸ Ferreira, 'A Hora Do Brasil De 70,' p.5; Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 12; Translated to English by Pontiero as: 'A male writer, that is, because a woman would make it all weepy and maudlin,' Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 14; translated to English by Moser as: 'Another writer, of course, but it would have to be a man for a woman would weep her heart out,' Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 6.

²⁰⁹ Luciana Namorato, 'A Tentação Do Silêncio Em Ela Não Sabe Gritar (Ou A Hora da Estrela), de Clarice Lispector,' *Hispania*, 94.1 (2011), pp. 50–62 (51), doi:[10.1353/hpn.2011.a424428](https://doi.org/10.1353/hpn.2011.a424428).

²¹¹ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 16.

²¹² Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 8.

	escrevo com o corpo ²¹⁰		
Section B	essa narrativa mexerá com uma coisa delicada: a criação de uma pessoa inteira que na certa está tão viva quanto eu ²¹³	this narrative will combine with something delicate: the creation of an entire human being who is much alive as I am ²¹⁴	this narrative will deal with something delicate: the creation of a whole person who surely is as alive as I am ²¹⁵

In Lispector's narrative, the relationship between the narrator, Rodrigo, and the protagonist, Macabéa, is complex and multifaceted, revealing tensions between defiance and control. In Section A, Rodrigo explicitly states that he is not an intellectual, a rejection consistent across the three texts. This statement underscores his rejection of traditional intellectualism, insinuating that intellectuals, often associated with masculine forms of writing, rely on the mind rather than the body. By claiming to write with his body, Rodrigo challenges the Cartesian/phallogocentric belief in reason as a reliable source of knowledge, which leads to the idea of 'objective writing' and the 'ideal of unbiased thought,' both of which have been upheld as standards in masculine literary traditions.²¹⁶ His emphasis on the body suggests a form of expression deeply rooted in physical, lived experience, as opposed to abstract intellectualism. Despite this apparent rejection of patriarchal intellectualism, Rodrigo still

²¹⁰ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 14.

²¹³ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 17.

²¹⁴ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 19.

²¹⁵ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 11.

²¹⁶ Namorato, 'A Tentação Do Silêncio,' p. 51; Daniela Spinelli, 'A posição do narrador, Rodrigo S. M., em *A Hora da Estrela*, de Clarice Lispector,' *FronteiraZ*, *FronteiraZ*, no. 1 (2008), pp. 1–10 (6).

enforces the ideals upheld by patriarchal thought and literary control. By writing Macabéa's story, he occupies a literary space that prevents her, a woman, from writing herself. In this act, Rodrigo inadvertently perpetuates the very systems of dominance he critiques. A possible contention is evident between Lispector's witty criticism of traditional patriarchal forms of writing and the need for Rodrigo to enact those.

The ambiguity of Rodrigo's role is further subverted in Section B, where Moser describes the narrative as dealing with 'something delicate' and the creation of 'a whole person who surely is as alive as I am.' Here, Rodrigo is likened to a figure engaged in the creation of life in a manner reminiscent of a mother that blurs the lines between masculine and feminine modes of creation. This positions him in a role traditionally associated with the feminine within the traditional gender binary, adding a layer of complexity to his character and ultimately a subversion of traditional gender expectations. In this maternal role, Rodrigo's authority remains unchallenged and further solidifies. The act of creating Macabéa does not empower her or grant her autonomy; instead, it further establishes his control over the protagonist. The creation of a 'whole person' as alive as Rodrigo himself underscores the extent of his narrative power as Macabéa's life is contingent upon his storytelling. In this sense, Rodrigo assumes an omnipotent quality, where his ability to create life within the narrative highlights his ultimate authority. The novel then depicts the entrenched gender binary of 'male' as creator and 'female' as re-creator: Rodrigo, despite rejecting intellectual phallocentrism, monopolises authorship and positions himself as the origin of Macabéa's life, while she exists only as a derivative re-creation within his narrative authority, or in other words, an understanding of women in relation to men within a patriarchal framework. This is complicated by Lispector due to the afforded queer inflection added to the creator/re-creator binary, as Rodrigo assumes the maternal function, queering maternity and destabilising heteronormative expectations of gender roles due to Rodrigo's quality as both father (patriarchal literary creator) and mother (life-giver). Ultimately, there is a clear tension in Rodrigo's characterisation. His rejection of intellectualism can be seen as an effort to break down traditional patriarchal power dynamics. This includes the power held by intellectuals in Brazil at the time.²¹⁷ It also has the potential to break down other

²¹⁷ Ferreira, 'A Hora Do Brasil De 70,' pp. 3-4.

power dynamics permutating from the patriarchal framework like mind versus body, man versus woman, and intellectual versus emotional. However, Rodrigo's position highlights the inherent contradiction in his role; while he positions himself as a subversive figure challenging masculine form of knowledge, he ultimately reinforces the very structures he seeks to critique by asserting control over Macabéa's narrative. His role as a narrator is thus deeply ambiguous, embodying both the potential for resistance and the perpetuation of patriarchal norms.

The authority of Rodrigo in creating Macabéa resides in his literary power to write her. This power also grants him the authority to define himself in the narration. Thus, Rodrigo comes into being in the narrative and explores his own identity by projecting difference onto Macabéa. A clear example of this dynamic can be found in the following passages:

	Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
SECTION A	[...] terei que me escrever todo através dela [...]. Os fatos são sonoros mas entre os fatos há um sussurro. É o sussurro o que me impressiona . ²¹⁸	[...] I shall have to write everything through her [...]. The facts are sonorous but among the facts there is a murmuring. It is the murmuring that frightens me. ²¹⁹	[...] I'll have to write out all of myself through her [...]. The facts are sonorous but between the facts there's a whispering. It's the whispering that astounds me. ²²⁰

²¹⁸ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 21.

²¹⁹ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 24.

²²⁰ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 16.

SECTION B	É paixão minha ser o outro. No caso a outra . ²²¹	It's my obsession to become the other man. In this case, the other woman ²²²	Being the other man is my passion. In this case the other woman ²²³
-----------	---	--	---

The presented excerpts show a significant difference between the texts regarding what narrating Macabéa implies for the narrative and, more specifically, for Rodrigo. Pontiero's translation in Section A renders a distinctly unique reading from Lispector and Moser, due to his use of 'everything' as his formulation for the Portuguese's 'todo.' Because of this, 'to write' modulates 'everything,' instead of operating on the subject (Rodrigo). In this manner, Pontiero's version notably underscores the narrator's egocentrism and affects the exploration of his ontology in the literary dimension. This is an apparent deviation from the subsequent narration and ultimately subverts the power dynamic Lispector is exploring. In this way, Rodrigo's system of projection is undermined, and instead of becoming a catalyst for the narrator, Macabéa is elevated to a level of privilege that renders her the filter of everything written and, in a way, the agent that is in the power of said narration. While Pontiero's rendering subverts the power dynamic introduced by Lispector with a clear effect that caters to a more conventional form of writing for the target audience and does not present experimental subversions such as the idea of 'writing himself through Macabéa,' Moser's version opts to maintain Lispector's power dynamic. In his version, the text operates using 'myself,' giving Rodrigo the power to define himself through his control of the narrative while depriving Macabéa of any possibility of self-definition.²²⁴ Therefore, this section

²²¹ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 26.

²²² Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 29.

²²³ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 21.

²²⁴ Luciano Barbosa Justino, 'A Hora da Estrela: Por Uma Leitura Nordestina,' *Estudos de Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea*, 51, 2017, pp. 64–82 (77), doi:[10.1590/2316-4018514](https://doi.org/10.1590/2316-4018514).

expressly shows how Rodrigo identifies his ‘self’ by othering Macabéa, establishing the patriarchal and social power dynamic that is central for our discussion.

Following Section A, both translations offer different interpretations of Lispector’s use of ‘susurro,’ influencing the characterisation and particularly the humanisation of Macabéa. Moser’s version translates ‘susurro’ as ‘whispering,’ which renders an act of communication in a low voice. The passage discusses Macabéa’s communicative action, which surprises Rodrigo and permeates his self-writing, indicating how Macabéa populates everything that is not Rodrigo with a sense of wonder and bewilderment about something beyond himself. It presents Rodrigo as portraying Macabéa in a more human light and acknowledging her ability to communicate, as the fascination of Rodrigo for Macabéa is one of the narrative’s driving forces. Moreover, if everything is written, all facts and words are a clear product of Rodrigo, and everything that escapes this, for example the silence, or even the white of the page against which the words are printed is ‘Macabéa,’ a topic that will be examined in detail later on. This translation also depicts Macabéa’s agency as an attempt to communicate with Rodrigo, precisely because her action is a ‘whisper.’ In Pontiero’s interpretation, the term ‘susurro’ is translated as ‘murmuring,’ diminishing the emphasis on the communicative aspect of whispering and potentially referring to a continuous non-human sound. This translation creates ambiguity and diminishes the agency granted to Macabéa in the other version, as ‘murmuring’ does not imply intentionality on the part of the source. However, it does alienate Macabéa further from Rodrigo, potentially enhancing the criticism of forms of patriarchal exploitation as everything that is ‘Macabéa’ escapes Rodrigo to the point of evading language itself. Hence, in Pontiero’s version, the use of ‘murmuring’ by its non-human quality, displaces the agency that feeds the narrative force granted to Macabéa in the other translation. In this way, Lispector and Moser both portray a Rodrigo aware of Macabéa’s attempt to communicate and his surprise, bewilderment, or wonder in understanding that she is alive, aligning Rodrigo’s portrayal with exotisation and fascination for the Other. Pontiero’s text instead enhances the stakes of the dynamic by portraying a Rodrigo who is frightened by the threat that is Macabéa’s existence, stripped from communicating but instead increasingly othered. Ultimately, each text depicts different motivations for writing, yet all represent dynamics of oppression and control between the narrator and the protagonist.

The tension in the narrative power dynamic is ultimately resolved towards the end of the novel. The dialectical relationship between Rodrigo and Macabéa, although first introduced as an explicit hierarchical dependency, is later revealed as co-dependent, with the fate of one intrinsically tied to the other. This interdependence culminates when Macabéa and Rodrigo experience death within the narrative, ultimately sublimating into a state of bliss that can be interpreted as the ‘Real’ in Lacanian terms. This is particularly significant because, according to the Lacanian model, the relationship between the self and the Other is non-reciprocal; the self uses the Other for self-definition and then discards it.²²⁵ However, the relationship between Rodrigo and Macabéa in the novel subverts this model. This then conforms to, following Slavoj Žižek’s Lacanian framework, the collapse of fantasy: the Other functions as the *objet petit* that sustains the subject’s symbolic coherence, and when this point of support is eliminated, the subject’s dependency on the symbolic network is exposed.²²⁶ In this case, Rodrigo’s inability to exist without Macabéa results in mutual annihilation; once the symbolic ‘umbilical cord’ that binds them is severed, the intrusion of the Real destabilises the symbolic reality of the Rodrigo-Macabéa dyad. The narrative then reconfigures itself through the sudden emergence of an unnamed narrator, re-establishing symbolic order for the reader. Unlike the traditional dynamic where the Self discards the Other and continues to exist independently, Rodrigo dies alongside Macabéa after writing her death. This establishes how Macabéa functions as an umbilical cord connecting Rodrigo to the narrative; once severed, this connection ceases and the m/other system is disrupted, cutting off any point of contact between Rodrigo and the narrative itself.²²⁷ In this sense, Macabéa’s death is an act of liberation: she escapes the confines of the narrative, collapsing the boundaries between textual space and reality, and disrupting the traditional separation between sign and signifier.²²⁸

²²⁵ Jacques Lacan, ‘The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,’ in *Reading French Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 2010), p. 99.

²²⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, The Essential Žižek (Verso, 2008), pp. 95-6.

²²⁷ Justino, ‘A Hora da Estrela: Por Uma Leitura Nordestina,’ p.76.

²²⁸ Justino, ‘A Hora da Estrela: Por Uma Leitura Nordestina,’ p.76.

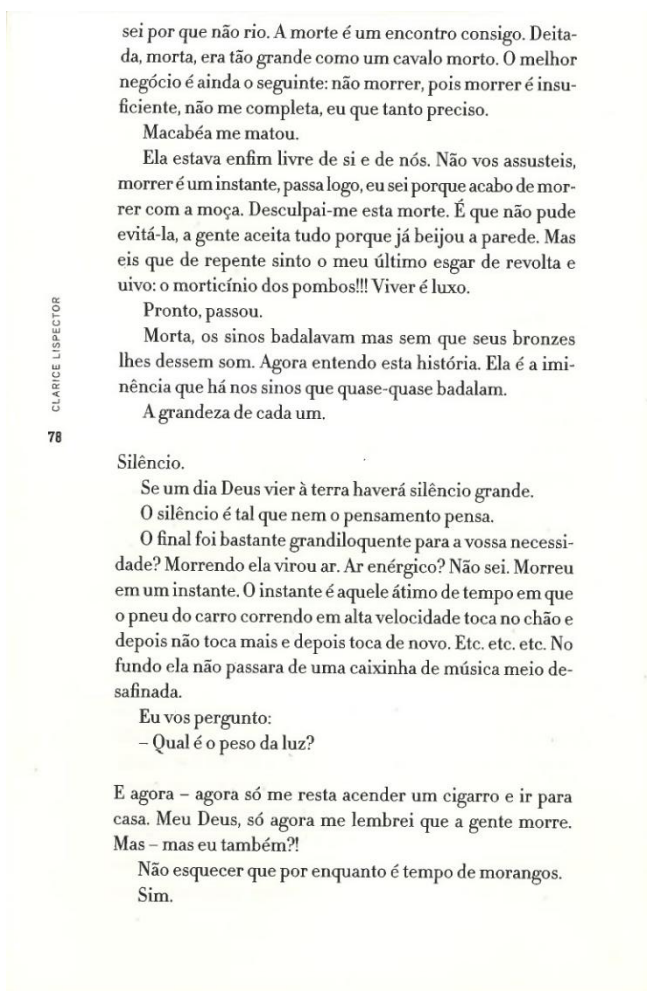


Figure 4. Clarice Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 78. Scan of the page to evidence the formatting of the section.

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
<p>A morte é um encontro consigo. Deitada, morta, era tão grande como um cavalo morto. O melhor negócio é ainda o seguinte: não morrer, pois morrer é insuficiente,</p>	<p>Death is an encounter with self. Laid out and dead, Macabéa looked as imposing as a dead stallion. The best thing is still the following: not to die, for to die is not enough. It fails to achieve my</p>	<p>Death is an encounter with oneself. Lying there, she was as big as a dead horse. The best thing is still this: not to die, because dying is insufficient, it doesn't</p>

<p>não me completa, eu que tanto preciso.</p> <p>Macabéa me matou.</p> <p>Ela estava enfim livre de si e de nós. Não vos assusteis, morrer é um instante, passa logo, eu sei porque acabo de morrer com a moça.</p> <p>Desculpai-me esta morte.²²⁹</p>	<p>greatest deed: self-fulfilment.</p> <p>Macabéa has murdered me.</p> <p>She is finally free of herself and of me. Do not be frightened. Death is instantaneous and passes in a flash. I know, for I have just died with the girl. Forgive my dying.²³⁰</p>	<p>complete me, I who need so much.</p> <p>Macabéa killed me.</p> <p>She was finally free of herself and of us. Don't be afraid, death is an instant, it passes like that, I know because I just died with the girl. Pray forgive me this death.²³¹</p>
--	--	---

In the excerpt, the deaths of both characters are filtered through the voice of Rodrigo, highlighting how the confrontation with the self occurs in the absence of the other. The two translations offer distinct nuances in their portrayal of this moment. Pontiero's choice of 'self' emphasises the individual's identity, while Moser's use of 'oneself' broadens the focus to the human condition. When translating 'me matou,' Pontiero opts for 'murdered me,' a choice that imbues Macabéa with a criminal agency, imposing an ethical dimension on her actions.²³² This translation suggests a violent and intentional act, as though Macabéa's death is an active crime against Rodrigo. Moser instead approaches this section by using 'killed me,' which, although it does attribute the act to Macabéa, does not bring about the same criminal heaviness that Pontiero's choice does.²³³ This approach creates a less morally charged interpretation, focusing instead on the inevitability of death rather than assigning

²²⁹ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 78.

²³⁰ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 85.

²³¹ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 76.

²³² Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 72.

²³³ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 72.

guilt. Furthermore, Pontiero's translation specifies that Macabéa is freed from herself and from Rodrigo, narrowing the scope of her liberation to these two entities.²³⁴ Moser's version, however, states that Macabéa is freed from herself 'and of us,' expanding the liberation to include not only Rodrigo but also the reader and, by extension, Lispector herself.²³⁵ In a sense, this includes all the figures that, in one of the possible readings offered, represented the figure of 'the intellectual.' Moser's translation, therefore, captures a deeper awareness of the philosophical tensions in Lispector's text, highlighting the absolute freedom that comes with the dissolution of identity and the embrace of the Real.²³⁶

On a similar note, both translators produce different emphases in their approach to 'Disculpai-me esta morte.' Pontiero's version ('Forgive my death') asks for forgiveness, more specifically, the narrator asks for the forgiveness of his own death, which implies a personal responsibility and a direct connection between the narrator and the reader in an acknowledgement of expectations in his roles as a narrator. In contrast, Moser's translation leaves the identity of the death ambiguous, allowing the plea for forgiveness to apply to either Rodrigo, Macabéa, or both. Thus, Moser produces a text closer to the ambiguity of Lispector's text, where the flexibility and responsibility placed upon Rodrigo's crime are noticeably different.²³⁷ Moreover, Moser's translation adds 'Pray,' in its form as a function to introduce a request or plea. This poses two undertones: it evokes a religious context, adding a spiritual dimension to the plea, and it also suggests a sense of humility in Rodrigo, contrasting with his earlier arrogance.²³⁸ This shift could be interpreted as a deconstruction of Rodrigo's identity, suggesting that he has become inseparable from Macabéa in death or that his identity has been dissolved through the narrative's unfolding. Ultimately, Pontiero's translation portrays Rodrigo as primarily responsible for his own death, a consequence of Macabéa's demise. Moser's translation, however, offers a more complex interpretation, where Rodrigo could be seen as responsible for his death, Macabéa's, or both, leaving the

²³⁴ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 73.

²³⁵ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 73.

²³⁶ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 73.

²³⁷ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 73.

²³⁸ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' p. 73.

moral and philosophical implications open to the reader. Moser’s translation preserves Lispector’s narrative’s ambiguity and fluidity, allowing for a richer exploration of the tensions between identity, responsibility, and freedom in *A Hora da Estrela*. However, the use of ‘murder’ and ‘kill’ are also used in the translations from Macabéa’s perspective in a way that frames her distinctively differently between the texts:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Quando via um [soldado], pensava com estremecimento de prazer: será que ele vai me matar ? ²³⁹	Whenever she caught sight of a soldier, she would think, trembling with excitement: is he going to murder me ? ²⁴⁰	Whenever she saw one [soldier], she though with a shiver of pleasure: is he going to kill me ? ²⁴¹

The translations of Macabéa’s internal thoughts in this passage reveal significant differences in how her character is framed, particularly regarding her sense of self-worth and agency. Pontiero’s use of ‘murder’ imbues the scene with a sense of intentionality and personal threat, suggesting that Macabéa perceives the soldier’s potential actions as a direct and deliberate assault on her being. This choice of word not only reinforces Macabéa’s humanity but also intensifies the emotional impact of her thoughts, as ‘murder’ implies a premeditated act against her as an individual, highlighting her vulnerability and the gravity of the imagined violence. In contrast, Moser’s use of ‘kill’ introduces a more detached and impersonal tone. This choice can be read as dehumanising Macabéa, reducing her to a passive object. The

²³⁹ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 31.

²⁴⁰ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 35.

²⁴¹ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 27.

soldier's potential for action, in this case, is less morally charged, stripping the moment of its potential for personal violation and reducing it to an act of destruction. The distinction between both texts offers different interpretations of Macabéa's psychological state. Pontiero's translation suggests that Macabéa perceives herself as a person who can provoke strong actions and emotions in others enough to be 'murdered.' Conversely, Moser's choice of 'kill' reflects a deeper alienation within Macabéa, portraying her as so detached from her own humanity that she views her potential death as something more inevitable and less meaningful, a mere cessation of existence rather than a tragic event.

Macabéa's Silence: An Inaccessible Ontology

Macabéa's (dis)placement in every text and its effects on her ontology are crucial to consider, given her existence as a being engendered by rhetoric, *literally* embodied in and by language. The only way of knowing Macabéa in the novel is through Rodrigo's unreliable narration, as Macabéa does not partake in the narrative process nor express herself extensively through conversations. This creates an implicit silence in the narrative, forming a (non-)space in which Macabéa (non-)exists. In other words, Macabéa's silence alienates her from the communicative act of the novel, a topic of great interest for Lispector, academic scholars, and central to this thesis' interest in the subversion and empowerment of the oppressed.

'Silence' is a relevant concept of interest for Lispector, as seen in her proposed scenario in *Cosmonauta na Terra*.²⁴² In this chronicle, Lispector imagines the first astronaut to see Earth from space, speculating that this unique experience would result in a profound alienation, producing 'um grande silêncio, mesmo que falasse.'²⁴³ Similarly, Macabéa's silence can be interpreted as stemming from the uniqueness of her experience, rendering her

²⁴² Clarice Lispector, *A Descoberta Do Mundo: Crônicas* (Relógio D'Água Editores, 2013), p. 28. My translation: a big/great silence, even if [I, Lispector positioning herself as the astronaut] spoke.

²⁴³ Namorato, 'A Tentação Do Silêncio,' p. 57.

incapable of communicating what cannot be reciprocated, a form of silence which also parallels the silence of the oppressed. This might refer to the experience of being a textual body or, as some have suggested, the challenges of surviving in extreme poverty. This positioning has been offered, for example, by Luciana Namorato, who states that the challenge of poverty explicitly consumes Macabéa's time, space, and energy, preventing her from any form of intellectual or emotional reflection or discussion of the self.²⁴⁴ Hence, since the act of communicating creates a dependency on the other subject to succeed, Macabéa's silence establishes the opposite: an ontological independence from the narrative, a process that is described as typical of Lispector's style by Olga de Sá.²⁴⁵ On the topic, Susan Sontag writes: 'A person who becomes silent becomes opaque for the other; somebody's silence opens up an array of possibilities for interpreting that silence, for imputing speech to it.'²⁴⁶ Macabéa's silence creates a textual independence from Rodrigo, which he interprets as a lack of thought or self-reflection, as seen, for example, in Pontiero's translation: 'I want to declare that this girl doesn't know herself except from living aimlessly. If she was dumb enough to ask herself "who am I?" she would fall flat on her face.'²⁴⁷ Her silence, therefore, can be interpreted as a strategy of resistance from that which is the projecting self (the narrator) and in which 'the other' survives independently.²⁴⁸ Moreover, as Hassan indicates: 'the language of silence conjoins the need both of self-destruction and self-transcendence.'²⁴⁹ Considering Macabéa as a character in (un)becoming, her silence disrupts the narrative's attempt to communicate and define her, allowing her to transcend the narrative through this very silence. In this way, Macabéa operates as a mode of deterritorialization that destabilises the language's normative control: a refusal to the 'major

²⁴⁴ Namorato, 'A Tentação Do Silêncio,' p. 51.

²⁴⁵ Olga de Sá, 'Clarice Lispector: Processos Criativos,' *Revista Iberoamericana*, 50.126 (1984), pp. 259–80 (278), doi:[10.5195/reviberoamer.1984.3876](https://doi.org/10.5195/reviberoamer.1984.3876).

²⁴⁶ Susan Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will*, Penguin Modern Classics (Penguin Books, 2009), p.16.

²⁴⁷ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 7.

²⁴⁸ Namorato, 'A Tentação Do Silêncio,' p. 54.

²⁴⁹ Ihab Hassan, *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), p. 12.

language’ of the narrator that seeks to capture and define her.²⁵⁰ By refusing to engage with the language that seeks to capture her, Macabéa resists the constraints of the narrative, asserting an existence beyond the words that attempt to define her, and inhabiting instead outside of said language. Rather than representing absence, her silence becomes a process of becoming ‘other,’ disrupting fixed subjectivity and producing a form of minor literature that resists totalisation.²⁵¹ In other words, her silence is not a negation, but a generative difference, pushing the narrative towards its limit and gesturing to what Deleuze, after Blanchot, defines as the Outside of language.²⁵²

Macabéa’s silence further relates to Cixous’ idea of ‘knowing how to not know,’ or in other words, the freedom from knowledge.²⁵³ Here, knowledge is understood as a construct shaped by masculine thought, defined by its need to project and define, making true freedom of being impossible within its confines.²⁵⁴ Halberstam expands on this idea: ‘failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world.’²⁵⁵ This notion is clearly reflected in Rodrigo’s epistemology, who states in each translation: ‘One way of getting is not looking, one way of having is not asking and only believing that the silence I believe to be inside me is the answer to my – to my mystery’ and ‘One way of obtaining is not to search; one way of possessing is not to ask; simply to believe that my inner silence is the solution to my – to my mystery.’²⁵⁶ This suggests that the silence might not solely be a form of resistance but could also represent a mystery (in this case in the shape of Macabéa) that

²⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Theory and History of Literature (University of Minnesota Press), v. 30 (University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 16-26.

²⁵¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, pp. 16-8.

²⁵² As described in Gilles Deleuze, ‘Literature and Life’, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, *Critical Inquiry*, 23.2 (1997), pp. 225–30 (229-30), doi:[10.1086/448827](https://doi.org/10.1086/448827).

²⁵³ Hélène Cixous, ‘The Author in Truth,’ in *Coming to Writing’ and Other Essays*, by Hélène Cixous, ed. by Deborah Jenson, trans. by Sarah Cornell (Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 136–81 (161).

²⁵⁴ Cixous, ‘The Author in Truth,’ p. 161.

²⁵⁵ Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, pp.2-3.

²⁵⁶ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 6; Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 14.

Rodrigo does not fully comprehend. Another textual example which, in this case, offers a distinct effect across the texts is found in:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Ela falava , sim, mas era extremamente muda . Uma palavra dela eu às vezes consigo mas ela me foge por entre os dedos [...] ²⁵⁷	She could speak , of course, but had little to say . No sooner do I succeed in persuading her to speak, than she slips through my fingers [...] ²⁵⁸	She talked , yes, but was extremely mute . Sometimes I manage to get a word out of her but it slips through my fingers [...] ²⁵⁹

These excerpts highlight the complex relationship between Macabéa's silence and Rodrigo's perception of it. Lispector and Moser's texts present a Macabéa who speaks, which contrasts sharply with the notion of her as 'extremely mute.' This oxymoron creates a stark and ambivalent portrayal: Macabéa talks, yet her words fail to communicate meaningfully. In essence, her speech falls on deaf ears, leaving her effectively mute, which reinforces her sense of isolation and otherness. This becomes especially significant when considering that Rodrigo narrates Macabéa's story without any true intention of communicating with her, since his focus is on defining himself. As the story unfolds, it becomes evident that even if Rodrigo attempts to prompt her to speak, any words she may share are silenced by his own projections. In the end, all of Macabéa's words are filtered through Rodrigo, making them devoid of true ownership. In Pontiero's version, the issue of agency is more pronounced. Macabéa is depicted as having the ability to speak but is portrayed as lacking the agency to communicate. The narrator might initially seem dismissive, possibly in line with a potential

²⁵⁷ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 26.

²⁵⁸ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 29.

²⁵⁹ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 21.

interpretation of Lispector's intent. However, the following text contradicts this interpretation, as Rodrigo is depicted as trying to persuade the character, while it is actually Macabéa who refuses to speak. In Lispector and Moser's texts, the alignment is kept, as the narrator, instead of 'persuading' the character, uses more forceful verbs that insinuate masculine writing practices ('consigo' and 'manage to get'). Still, a key differentiation takes place between the three texts, as in Pontiero's version, it is Macabéa herself who slips through the fingers of the narrator, adding to the depth of Rodrigo's frustration when writing someone that cannot be grasped within his hand. In contrast, Lispector and Moser's text sustain ambiguity through the use of 'ela' and 'it,' the elusive element that escapes Rodrigo's grasp. In these cases, Macabéa is firmly held by Rodrigo, but her words, or herself, slip away, emphasising the impossibility of true communication. This imagery aligns with the novel's central themes, where the forceful projection of the self onto the other is more starkly presented, highlighting the futility of communication. In Lispector and Moser's versions, the focus is on the impossibility of defining the character's ontology, conveying both, her words, and herself; in Pontiero's, the impossibility lies in Macabéa only.

Made With Words: The Ontology of the Narrative

In exploring the narrative's ontology, we must first approach this topic through the complex interplay between silence and language that defines the characters and their realities. While Macabéa finds a form of partial freedom and reality through her escape of a form of masculine discourse, Rodrigo contrasts this with his writing practices, attempting to convey reality through language. Language, however, is inherently constructed; it represents reality through signs and signifiers, mimicking but never fully equalling the reality it seeks to portray.²⁶⁰ This reflects the nature of translation, which endeavours to emulate the source text as a target text, existing in an ambivalent space of simultaneously wanting (not) to be the source text. Expanding on Godard's assertion that 'translation is production, not

²⁶⁰ Namorato, 'A Tentação Do Silêncio Em "Ela Não Sabe Gritar",' p. 50.

reproduction,’ it may be more accurate to consider translation as (re)production.²⁶¹ In this context, the translators’ interpretations have influenced their translations in unique ways, which would suggest that the translator’s profile and interpretation of the text heavily reconfigures a unique text that does (not) convey the source text. Hence, we can see Rodrigo’s concerns with his writing practices in:

	Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Section A	Se esta história não existe, passará a existir. ²⁶²	If this history does not exist, it will come to exist. ²⁶³	If this story doesn’t exist now, it will. ²⁶⁴
Section B	Não se trata apenas de narrativa, é antes de tudo vida primária que respira, respira, respira. ²⁶⁵	[...] for this is not simply a narrative, but above all primary life that breathes, breathes, breathes. ²⁶⁶	This isn’t just a narrative, it’s above all primary life that breathes, breathes, breathes. ²⁶⁷
Section C	Juro que este livro é feito sem palavras. É	I swear that this book is composed without	I swear this book is made without words. It

²⁶¹ Godard, ‘Theorizing Feminist Discourse,’ p. 47.

²⁶² Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 9.

²⁶³ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 11.

²⁶⁴ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 1.

²⁶⁵ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 11.

²⁶⁶ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 13.

²⁶⁷ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 5.

	uma fotografia muda. Este livro é um silêncio. Este livro é uma pergunta. ²⁶⁸	words: like a mute photograph. This book is a silence: an interrogation. ²⁶⁹	is a mute photograph. This book is a silence. This book is a question. ²⁷⁰
--	---	---	--

In the excerpts above, Rodrigo's philosophical concerns become evident, revealing his deep engagement with the nature of existence and its relationship with the act of writing as a narrator. For instance, in Section A, the paradoxical nature of the story is highlighted: this story that both does and does not exist is said to come into being, and its narrative is described as alive in a way that transcends language. However, the translations by Pontiero and Moser introduce subtle differences that reflect their interpretations of the source text. For example, the difference between translating 'história' as 'history' or 'story,' influences the readership's interpretation of Rodrigo's perception of the 'história.' On one hand, 'history' implies past events, or in other words, something that has happened. On the other hand, 'story' describes a series of events that may be true or imagined. Pontiero's translation leans towards an almost oxymoronic rendering, directly reflecting Lispector's text (past events that will come into existence) establishing the novel's reality and connecting with the idea that the narrative 'breathes' (Section B) and is 'made without words' (Section C). On the other hand, Moser's use of 'story' emphasises the novel's inherent ambiguity, suggesting its constructed nature, yet this is paradoxically contrasted by the assertion that the narrative is explicitly alive/ real. Finally, Lispector's text uses 'história,' a term that can mean either, story and history, yet due to not using 'estória,' the closest word to story, one can infer the proximity between Pontiero and Lispector due to the ambiguity afforded, whereas Moser's effect deviates.

In Section C, in the source text by Lispector, Rodrigo asserts that the book (*A Hora da Estrela/The Hour of the Star*) is a book that is made 'sem palavras' (without words),

²⁶⁸ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 14.

²⁶⁹ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 17.

²⁷⁰ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 8.

encapsulating everything that the book is as that which escapes language. Therefore, due to its wordless quality, the source text uses different symbolism to depict the book. More explicitly, it is portrayed as a mute picture, a silence, and a question. Each of these is presented separately, with no connection or correlation between them, yet their (not) communicative nature becomes evident. This enumeration of what the book is made of, a holographic superposition of a photograph, a silence, and a question, is intervened in Pontiero's rendering through a sequence of correlations by changing the punctuation. The book is composed without words in this version, 'like' a mute photograph, stipulating a comparison. Moreover, this comparison restrains the holographic superposition Lispector rendered in the source text, in which the book is also the photograph, silence, and interrogation. This manipulation of the source text is repeated in the following sentence of Pontiero's translation, in which using a colon connects the silence with the interrogation. By doing so, the silence within the narrative is deeply connected with the idea of an interrogation taking place. The most apparent form of silence present in the novel is that of Macabéa, which through this section can be recontextualised as an interrogation, a form of communication instead of a disconnection from communication. Furthermore, using the word 'interrogation' instead of 'question' in the last sentence creates a more formal and authoritative tone. This suggests a thorough and demanding inquiry rather than a simple, open-ended question. As a result, it makes the book's ontology appear more intense and aggressive than the simplicity of the source text. Furthermore, this sense of confrontation is sustained in Pontiero's rendering, as, for example, Rodrigo's sense of obligation towards his writing is reflected as: 'It is my duty, however unrewarding, to confront her with her own existence.'²⁷¹ Pontiero posits that the narrator's purpose is to confront Macabéa with herself, substantiating the use of interrogation, and distancing Rodrigo's consistent focus on othering Macabéa to write himself through her but instead he aims to apparently affect Macabéa.

Moser instead strengthens the division of the book, keeping its elements separate, similar to the source text, and recreates the holographic superposition of imagery that the book represents. By maintaining the word 'question,' Moser's version emphasises the immediacy and accessibility of the text and moderates the final statement, inviting the reader

²⁷¹ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 13.

to consider the book as a source of contemplation rather than a demand for answers. Moser's translation, then, preserves the enigmatic quality of Lispector's prose while rendering it more intimate and less formal than Pontiero, inviting the reader into a reflective, rather than aggressive, experience and prioritising Lispector's pacing. This is also substantiated by Moser's choices when depicting the narrator's purpose: 'And my duty, however artlessly, to reveal her life.'²⁷² Conversely to Pontiero's confrontation, Moser instead renders the concept of revelation, which alters the ethical dimension of Rodrigo's role. Instead of aiming to impact Macabéa directly, Moser's version positions Rodrigo as a narrator who seeks to present Macabéa, suggesting a more passive or observational approach.

These excerpts demonstrate how Rodrigo struggles with the ethical challenges of 'transcendence': the attempt to transcend language to capture the essence of Macabéa's existence.²⁷³ Pontiero's translation hints at an ethical struggle to engage with the subject in a way that might lead to her self-recognition. At the same time, Moser's approach prioritises the ethical responsibility of representation and the narrator's projection system. These differences in Rodrigo's ontology are also consistently sustained in the texts when approaching his relation to Macabéa, as seen in:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
E esta é também a minha mais primeira condição: a de caminhar paulatinamente apesar da impaciência que	This, too, is my first condition; to proceed slowly notwithstanding my	And this is also my most primary condition: to go along gently despite my

²⁷² Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 5.

²⁷³ 'Transcendence' refers to the ethical act of a human being ascending closer to a divine level above mortality. To see more: Joseph Ballan, 'Divine Anonymities: On Transcendence and Transcendence in the Works of Levinas, Celan, and Lispector,' *Religion and the Arts*, 12.4 (2008), pp. 540–58 (551), doi:[10.1163/156852908X357380](https://doi.org/10.1163/156852908X357380).

tenho em relação a essa moça [...] ²⁷⁴	impatience to tell you about this girl [...] ²⁷⁵	impatience with that girl [...] ²⁷⁶
--	--	---

Pontiero's rendering of the narrator is one of someone impatient in telling the reader about Macabéa. This impatience is framed in terms of urgency to narrate, placing emphasis on the act of narrating and linking the narrator's impatience from his relationship with the narrative process to his reader. Meanwhile, Moser's translation, consistent with the source text, depicts the narrator's impatience directed to Macabéa, bringing forth the theme of his obligation to write (about) her to project and write himself. This change heightens the dynamic between the narrator and the subject, casting Macabéa as a burdensome figure who requires specific pacing and which does not align with Rodrigo, highlighting in part her fragile nature. This distinction consistently portrays Rodrigo as a narrator constantly bothered or constrained by Macabéa, evident in Lispector and Moser's work. In this way, Moser maintains the tensions underlined in the source text, placing Macabéa as a source of discomfort, whereas Pontiero reinvents this tension as a self-contained tension within the narrator who is impatient to communicate to the reader, redirecting the focus. Pontiero's redirection reduces the tension and instead undermines the complexity of the feminist critique of the gendered power dynamic evident in Lispector's text while further adapting the text as the first translation into English, heightening the urgency of the storytelling instead. Moser, however, renders the same tension as that found in Lispector's, offering a crucial understanding of the troubled relationship with the act of writing about someone who both compels and repels Rodrigo, thus othering Macabéa effectively.

Following, the purpose of the narrative is also modulated in translation. In this case, shifting from Rodrigo's relationship towards Macabéa, the narrator instead describes the nature of the story itself again, which this time is described as a form of imminence. More

²⁷⁴ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 14.

²⁷⁵ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 16.

²⁷⁶ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 8.

particularly, this imminence is not defined at the beginning but towards the end of the novel and it is established through visual and auditorial imagery:

	Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Section A	Como eu irei dizer agora, esta história será o resultado de uma visão gradual – há dois anos e meio venho aos poucos descobrindo os porquês. É visão da iminência de. De quê? Quem sabe se mais tarde saberei. ²⁷⁷	I should explain that this story will emerge from a gradual vision – for the past two and a half years I have slowly started discovering the whys and the wherefores. It is the vision of the imminence of... of what? Perhaps I shall find out later. ²⁷⁸	As I'll now explain, this story will be the result from a gradual vision – for the last two and a half years I've been slowly discovering the whys. It's the vision of the imminence of. Of what? Maybe I'll figure it out later. ²⁷⁹
Section B	[...] os sinos badalavam mas sem que seus bronzes lhes dessem som. Agora entendo esta história. Ela é a iminência que há nos	The bells were ringing without making any sound. I now understand this story. She is the imminence in those bells, pealing so softly.	[...] the bells were ringing but without their bronzes giving them sound. Now I understand this story. It is the imminence in those

²⁷⁷ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 10.

²⁷⁸ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 12.

²⁷⁹ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 4.

	sinos que quase-quase badalam.	The greatness of every human being. ²⁸¹	bells that almost-almost ring.
	A grandeza de cada um. ²⁸⁰		The greatness of every one. ²⁸²

Here, Macabéa's story written by Rodrigo is described as an undetermined imminence. Macabéa is characterised by this quality of a being of pre-discursive essence, engendered and embodied within rhetoric yet deprived of immaterial power or epistemic right.²⁸³ In Section A, for example, Lispector's use of 'de.' provides an abrupt end that resonates with the concept of something that escapes language, aligning with the theme of projection and the very essence of Macabéa that escapes Rodrigo. Therefore, this full stop is purposefully placed to express the idea that this story is the imminence of something that holds no sign but exists outside of the language system, much like how women's experiences have historically remained outside official records, marginalised on the periphery of knowledge.²⁸⁴ Moser's translation aligns with this expression, as it emulates the abruptness of Lispector's text. However, Pontiero's translation introduces the use of an ellipsis, which imposes a sense of suspension. This shift suggests that what is being discussed will be resumed rather than interrupted.²⁸⁵ For this reason, Pontiero's translation offers a dissimilar experience in which the narrator seems to seek the word that encapsulates this eminence and finds no word to add, suggesting indecisiveness or a lack of knowledge and certainty.

²⁸⁰ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 78.

²⁸¹ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 85.

²⁸² Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 76.

²⁸³ Justino, 'A Hora da Estrela: Por Uma Leitura Nordestina,' p. 75.

²⁸⁴ For more on women's marginalisation from knowledge production in the specific field of writing, please see: Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (University of Texas Press, 1983).

²⁸⁵ Esteves, 'Uma Discussão,' p. 663.

As observed in Section B, by the end of the novel, the story is the imminence in the bells that almost ring. Pontiero's translation, which initially introduced a pause or suspension in Section A, ultimately resolves this tension by suggesting that the bells are 'pealing so softly.' This choice implies that the sound, while present, is gentle and subdued, offering a sense of quiet resolution. In contrast, Moser's translation preserves the source's ambiguity and tension by stating that the bells 'almost-almost' ring. This phrasing mirrors the source text's exploration of a sound that is on the cusp of emerging but remains suspended, creating an auditory tension akin to a 'silence' on the verge of breaking. Moser's approach captures this nuance, preserving the uncertainty and the thematic richness of imminence that pervades the novel, whereas Pontiero's version leans towards a more softened interpretation. Still, each translation sustains its own reading; for example, Pontiero interprets this passage, suggesting that the sound is soft, reminiscent of the earlier whisper observed in Macabéa's existence. Moser, conversely, offers a similar tension to Lispector, in which sound is not produced but almost, and reinforces the silence of the novel.

Truncated Syntax and the Malleability of Meaning in Translation

A prominent feature of Lispector's style is her use of truncated syntax, often expressed through abrupt endings and fragmented structures. However, when translated, these syntactical choices present unique challenges and opportunities. The target language may not offer the same flexibility for such breaks, forcing the translator to either strive to preserve the stylistic elements or bridge the linguistic differences to convey content more smoothly, each approach potentially leading to subtle shifts in meaning. This becomes particularly relevant in the following segment, which builds on the previous section's discussion of the thematic significance of 'screaming' and 'protesting' in each text:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Então eu canto algo agudo uma melodia sincopada e	I break out into a strident, highpitched, syncopated	So high-pitched I sing a strident and syncopated

estridente – é a minha própria dor, eu que carrego o mundo e há falta de felicidade. Felicidade? ²⁸⁶	melody. It is the sound of my own pain, of someone who carries this world where there is so little happiness. Happiness? ²⁸⁷	melody – it’s my own pain, I who carry the world and there is a lack of happiness. Happiness? ²⁸⁸
---	--	--

In this section, Lispector employs truncated syntax, creating an expectation for the subject ‘minha própria dor’ (my own pain), only to disrupt it with the unexpected ‘eu’ (I).²⁸⁹ This disruption is enhanced by the connector ‘and,’ which traditionally operates as a grammatical bridge for connectivity, yet this connection is lost, and instead, it is introduced as a depiction of a world devoid of happiness.²⁹⁰ As a result, it creates a sense of forced connectivity that enforces strangeness and disconnection, in which the scream described as a form of melody becomes synonymous with pain itself.²⁹¹ Lispector uses this technique to represent otherness both in content and form. In other words, by disrupting the expected syntax, Lispector breaks symbolic representation at its most structural level, invoking the ‘Real’ by ‘sweeping away syntax [that] breaks the grammatical line, which acts for men as a surrogate umbilical cord.’²⁹² Pontiero’s consistent target-culture-oriented translation and adaptive techniques address and ‘tame’ Lispector’s syntax. This results in a more cohesive and connected structure, displacing the scream as the expression of pain instead of its embodiment.²⁹³ The insertion of ‘someone’ and the repetition of ‘of’ in Pontiero’s translation creates a less abrupt text than the source in Portuguese, softening the impact of Lispector’s disruptive style. While

²⁸⁶ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 10.

²⁸⁷ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 12.

²⁸⁸ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, pp. 3-4.

²⁸⁹ Esteves, ‘Uma Discussão,’ p. 663.

²⁹⁰ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 663.

²⁹¹ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 663.

²⁹² Hélène Cixous, ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’, trans. by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs*, 1.4 (1976), pp. 875–93 (886).

²⁹³ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 12.

this may make the text more accessible to English readers, it also risks diminishing the visceral impact of the source text, where the signing and the pain are the same, whereas in Pontiero, a scream is described and then related as the sound of the pain.²⁹⁴ Pontiero's translative choice further modulates the source text since 'there is so little happiness' conveys a subtle sense of positivity because it implies the presence of some happiness, however minimal. In contrast, the source in Portuguese emphasises the absence of happiness through the word 'falta,' which underscores the lack of happiness and heightens the theme of poverty throughout the novel. This shift in translation subtly alters the emotional tone, as the source's focus on scarcity is somewhat softened in Pontiero's version. Yet, this slight positivity is counterbalanced by the choice of 'break out,' which brings back the intensity and reminds the reader of the narrator's pathos. Conversely, Moser, who translates closer to the source text, emphasises the source's disruptiveness by recreating its structure. His translation includes a near-interlinear rendering with the word 'sing,' which humanises and infuses the narrator's communicative act with artistic purpose.

Lispector's malleability in translation demonstrates the challenges posed by her truncated syntax and unconventional grammar, highlighting the delicate balance between maintaining the source's linguistic disruption and adapting it for a new audience, as seen for example, in the following excerpts:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
[...] esta história não tem nenhuma técnica, nem de estilo, ela é ao deus-dará. [...]. ²⁹⁵	[...] this story has no technique, not even in matters of style. It has	[...] this story has no technique, nor style, it

²⁹⁴ Esteves, 'Uma discussão,' p. 663.

²⁹⁵ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 32.

	been written at random. [...]. ²⁹⁶	lives from hand to mouth. [...]. ²⁹⁷
--	---	---

In this passage, Pontiero clarifies what Lispector leaves more ambiguous by adding ‘not even in matters of style.’ This choice simplifies an aspect that Lispector leaves to the reader’s interpretation, altering the nuance of the text. By bringing to the surface something implicit in the source text, Pontiero’s translation reduces the ambiguity, potentially limiting the reader’s engagement with the subtleties of Lispector’s prose. In Pontiero’s version, ‘style’ is presented as subordinate to the ‘technique’ of the author, whereas in the source text, technique and style are presented as differentiated but not explicitly connected concepts. Alternatively, Moser’s translation maintains the parity between ‘technique’ and ‘style’ with the phrase ‘no technique, nor style,’ which aligns more closely with the source’s syntax, though it subtly shifts the emphasis. Another example of the differences between the translations is found in the second part of the abstract. Lispector’s use of the idiom ‘deus-dará,’ (left to chance/ God will give) conveys a sense of randomness or lack of control in the narrative’s creation. Pontiero translates this as ‘random,’ which captures the general meaning but loses the idiomatic strength of the source text.²⁹⁸ Moser, however, translates it as ‘hand to mouth,’ an English idiom that typically describes a precarious or barely sufficient way of life. This phrase suggests a struggle for survival, thereby deepening the theme of poverty, a central element in the text.²⁹⁹ The choice of ‘hand to mouth’ also introduces a physical and metaphorical dimension, implying that the story is being created from writing, to moth, which could imply either living, or the act of feeding. This translation grounds the narrative in the physical reality of Macabéa’s struggle and her character’s unfinished, evolving nature. Moser’s use of this idiom thus adds a layer of meaning that resonates with the novel’s exploration of the constant state of becoming that defines Macabéa’s life.

²⁹⁶ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, pp. 35-6.

²⁹⁷ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 28.

²⁹⁸ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 665.

²⁹⁹ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 665.

Pontiero's translation tends to collapse the opportunities of meaning into a digested and guided option, while Moser's translation embraces the ambiguity of the source text, however, this does not mean that either translation fails to benefit from opportunities to emphasise the core ideas of the source text when such possibilities arise in the new language. An example of this can be found in the following abstract:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Pensar é um ato . Sentir é um fato . Os dois juntos - sou eu [...]. ³⁰⁰	To think is an act , to feel is a fact . Put the two together – it is me [...]. ³⁰¹	Thinking is an act . Feeling is a fact . Put the two together – I am [...]. ³⁰²

In this passage, Lispector subtly reflects on the interplay between thought and emotion, challenging traditional phallogocentric hierarchies prioritising *facts*, often seen as synonymous with objectivity and masculine forms of knowledge. In patriarchal structures, *facts* are elevated as a reflection of reality, while subjective experiences such as *feelings* are often marginalised. Lispector disrupts this binary by creating a balanced relationship between thinking and feeling, suggesting that both are essential to constructing Rodrigo's selfhood. Linguistically, all three versions, Lispector's, Pontiero's, and Moser's, retain the wordplay where 'fato' (fact) contains 'ato' (act), symbolically embedding thought within emotion. This highlights the interdependence of these concepts and underscores the narrator's complex engagement with self-reflection and identity formation. By embedding 'act' within 'fact,' Lispector subtly subverts the phallogocentric view, proposing a more integrated, non-binary understanding of reality challenging patriarchal discourse. In the translations in English, both Pontiero and Moser effectively mirror this wordplay. The resonance between

³⁰⁰ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 9.

³⁰¹ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 11-2.

³⁰² Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 3.

‘act’ and ‘fact’ is maintained, though the emphasis shifts slightly due to the phonetic qualities of English. The assonance of the /f/ sound in both ‘fact’ and ‘feeling’ creates a phonetic linkage that reinforces their conceptual connection. This is particularly significant in creating the narrator’s selfhood, as the texts indicate, ‘Put the two together – I am,’ encapsulating the fusion of thought and emotion into a unified self. Lispector’s intertwining of ‘act’ (symbolic) and ‘feeling’ (semiotic) challenges the dominance of the symbolic, allowing the semiotic to surface and deconstruct the phallogocentrism inherent in dominant discourse. The ‘feeling-act’ or ‘felt act’ emerges as a hybrid form that resists binary categorisation. This passage exemplifies how translation can reveal the source text’s subtle complexities while opening up new interpretative possibilities that align with Lispector’s feminist and philosophical inquiries. Another example of creating new meaning that resonates with the core ideas of the source text is found in the following excerpts:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
<p>Tudo isso, sim, a história é história. Mas sabendo antes para nunca esquecer que a palavra é fruto da palavra. A palavra tem que se parecer com a palavra. Atingi-la é o meu primeiro dever para comigo. E a palavra não pode ser enfeitada e artisticamente vã, tem que ser apenas ela.³⁰³</p>	<p>Yes, all this, for history is history. But knowing before-hand so as never to forget that the word is the fruit of the word. The word must resemble the word. To attain the word is my first duty to myself. The word must not be adorned and become aesthetically</p>	<p>All this, yes, the story is history. But knowing beforehand so you never forget that the word is the fruit of the word, the word must resemble the word. Reaching it is my first duty to myself. And the word can’t be dressed up and artistically vain, it can only be itself.³⁰⁵</p>

³⁰³ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 17.

³⁰⁵ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 11.

	worthless; it must be simply itself. ³⁰⁴	
--	--	--

In this passage, Rodrigo writes with a deliberate simplicity, stating, ‘a história é história,’ and then explains his intent to avoid grandiloquent language, as embellishing the language would, in a sense, undermine or ‘kill’ Macabéa. Moser’s translation highlights the dialectical nature of ‘**h**istory,’ suggesting that the story is not just a narrative but also Rodrigo’s own story: his attempt to imbue Macabéa with meaning and define himself through ‘the other.’ Moser subtly shifts the emphasis by differentiating between ‘story’ and ‘history,’ underscoring Rodrigo’s central role in the narrative. This choice, however, diminishes the source’s repetitive simplicity, reinforcing the narrator’s straightforward focus on the word. Pontiero’s translation, conversely, stays closer to the source text’s style, maintaining its simplicity and repetition. His approach reflects the source text’s emphasis on the unadorned nature of language, aligning with Rodrigo’s stated intention not to dress up words in a way that would betray their essence. Moser’s translation choice, while insightful, potentially sacrifices the source’s insistence on repetition for a more nuanced distinction between ‘story’ and ‘history.’ An alternative approach that would be in line with feminist translation practices and would creatively explore the opportunities brought by the English language would be the use of ‘ourstory’ or ‘herstory.’ In further detail, aligning with Moser’s strategy yet allowing the translator to gain further agency and embolden their text could involve the use of ‘ourstory,’ emphasising the duality of the Rodrigo-Macabéa relationship, or ‘herstory,’ which would highlight Rodrigo’s attempt to tell Macabéa’s story and challenge the phallogocentric implications of ‘history.’ This alternative, however, raises the question of whether Rodrigo is aware of the extent to which his writing practices impact Macabéa. Ultimately, the contrast between Pontiero’s restraint, Moser’s interpretative distinctions, and the possibilities for creative translation practices, underscores the transformative nature of translation. Each text not only reconfigures the relationship between Rodrigo and Macabéa

³⁰⁴ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 20.

but also reshapes the reader's engagement with the narrative, collapsing into a unique effect upon each reading.

The Body in Translation

In the novel *A Hora da Estrela*, the body is a central topic of discussion and experience, particularly Macabéa's body. The narrator, Rodrigo, frequently discusses Macabéa's body, illustrating how the projection and othering of Macabéa objectifies her and strips her of her humanity, enforcing upon her patriarchal dynamics of othering. These segments can be contrasted with the narrator-reader relationship, in which the shared experience of perceiving Macabéa takes place through writing or reading. The narrative presents two opposite types of relationships. One type involves unity and pertains to the narrator-reader dyad, where the body becomes a communal space for shared experiences, blurring the limits of identity in a space reminiscent of the Real. The other type involves a projection heavily grounded in the Symbolic, where one person, symbolising the phallogocentric discourse, projects and 'others' the protagonist, turning her into a vessel for others' determination rather than self-determination. The first kind of relation, the narrator-reader dyad, is exemplified in the following passage:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
A dor de dentes que perpassa esta história deu uma fígada funda em plena boca nossa. ³⁰⁶	The toothache that passes through this narrative has	The toothache that runs through this story has given

³⁰⁶ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 10.

	given me a sharp twinge right in the mouth. ³⁰⁷	me a sharp stab in the middle of our mouth. ³⁰⁸
--	--	---

In these abstracts, Rodrigo uses a collective metaphor in which the body becomes a shared space, specifically the mouth. The pain, symbolised by a toothache, is not confined to one individual but is instead experienced within the ‘boca nossa’: a communal mouth. This metaphor suggests a shared, embodied experience between Rodrigo and the reader, both implicated in the narrative and affected by Macabéa’s existence. This collective body is modulated differently in the translations. Pontiero’s version does not localise the mouth that experiences the pain in Rodrigo exclusively by using the pronoun ‘me’ without indicating any shared experience. This translation individualises the suffering, removing the communal aspect Lispector’s source text suggests and therefore erasing the connection between the narrator and the reader. Moser’s translation, similar to Pontiero’s version, introduces a pronoun, ‘me,’ not present in the source text. Following, Moser’s approach when opting for the possessive pronoun ‘our’ could be interpreted as an attempt to maintain the source text’s syntactical impact, where the abrupt appearance of ‘nossa’ at the end of the sentence shifts the meaning and forces the reader to reconsider the collective nature of the experience. A theorised reason for this strategy, on Moser’s behalf, stipulates that he might have desired to reproduce the source text’s grammatical and syntax level by prioritising the fact that ‘nossa’ appears last in the source text’s sentence and abruptly affects the meaning of it.³⁰⁹ Thus, the initial introduction of ‘me’ creates tension between the individual and the collective, which is later redirected towards the source text’s effect on the collective body. Still, the addition of ‘me’ implies that Rodrigo uniquely feels the sharp stab, introducing a duality where the pain is both shared and personally experienced. On this subject, scholar Esteves has proposed the alternative ‘in the middle of this mouth of ours,’ in order to capture the communal aspect

³⁰⁷ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 12.

³⁰⁸ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 3.

³⁰⁹ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 662.

more explicitly.³¹⁰ This version maintains the collective experience without diluting the shared responsibility and connection that Lispector seems to emphasise.

Following this imagery, Rodrigo further describes Macabéa's body using this recurrent image of a 'cavity' in a way that continues to explore these themes of shared suffering and otherness:

	Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Section A	Macabéa [...] tinha uma infelicidade: era sensual . Como é que num corpo cariado como o dela cabia tanta lascívia , [...] ³¹¹	[...] Macabéa had one unfortunate trait: she was sensual . How could there be so much sensuality in a body as withered as hers , [...] ³¹²	Macabéa [...] had an unhappiness: she was sensual . How could it be that in a cavity-ridden body so much lasciviousness could fit , [...] ³¹³
Section B	Eu bem sei que dizer que a datilógrafa tem o corpo cariado é um dizer de brutalidade	I realize that in saying that my typist has a diseased body , I am saying something	I'm well aware that saying the typist has a body full of holes is more brutal than any bad word ³¹⁶

³¹⁰ Esteves, 'Uma discussão,' p. 662.

³¹¹ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 55.

³¹² Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 52.

³¹³ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 60.

³¹⁶ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 27.

	pior que qualquer palavra. ³¹⁴	much more offensive than any obscenity ³¹⁵	
--	---	---	--

In Section A, Macabéa's body is described in the source in Portuguese as having a 'corpo cariado,' a phrase rich with connotations of decay and deterioration. Pontiero translates this as 'a body as withered as hers,' emphasising the sense of physical and perhaps existential decline that 'cariado' implies. In other words, Pontiero's choice of 'withered' focuses on the external appearance of decay, reflecting the general neglect and impoverishment that defines Macabéa's existence.³¹⁷ However, Moser takes a more literal approach, translating the phrase as 'a cavity-ridden body.' The term 'cavity' here is particularly significant because it conveys the literal decay associated with 'caries' (tooth decay) and introduces the idea of a body riddled with holes. This translation choice amplifies the imagery of Macabéa as a figure marked by emptiness, lack, and perhaps even a sense of violation.³¹⁸ The notion of 'holes' in her body carries heavy sexual implications, suggesting a vulnerability and a focus on Macabéa's physicality that is not as explicitly reinforced in the source text.³¹⁹

Section B further underscores this interpretation, where 'corpo cariado' is again rendered differently by both translators. Pontiero departs from his earlier translation, opting for the word 'diseased,' which standardises the description and aligns it more closely with Macabéa's tuberculosis, a disease historically associated with poverty and decay.³²⁰ In contrast, Moser maintains his emphasis on the idea of 'cavities' and 'holes,' reinforcing the imagery of a body that is not just diseased but perforated, perhaps alluding to Rodrigo's masculine gaze that objectifies and penetrates Macabéa's body.³²¹ These differing

³¹⁴ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 31.

³¹⁵ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 35.

³¹⁷ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' 70.

³¹⁸ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' 70.

³¹⁹ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' 70.

³²⁰ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' 71.

³²¹ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' 71.

translations highlight a significant divergence in how the two translators interpret the imagery and symbolism of Macabéa's body. Pontiero's translation leans towards an interpretation focused on disease and physical decay, framing Macabéa as a figure of tragic frailty.³²² Moser's choice, however, brings out the unsettling implications of the masculine gaze, portraying her body as something that has been hollowed out and rendered mute, existing primarily as an object within a patriarchal narrative.³²³ This interpretation aligns closely with the attitude adopted by the narrator, whose perspective often reduces Macabéa to a mere vessel devoid of voice or agency. This reduction is vividly illustrated in other segments of the narration, such as the following:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Penso no sexo de Macabéa, miúdo mas inesperadamente coberto de grossos e abundantes pêlos negros — seu sexo era a única marca veemente de sua existência. ³²⁴	I think about Macabéa's vagina, minute , yet unexpectedly covered with a thick growth of black hairs — her vagina was the only vehement sign of her existence. ³²⁵	I think of Macabéa's sex, mute but unexpectedly covered with thick and abundant black hairs — her sex was the only vehement sign of her existence. ³²⁶

In these abstracts, the narrator reflects on Macabéa's genitalia as 'a única marca veemente de sua existência.' The starkness of this statement highlights how Rodrigo reduces Macabéa's identity to her sexual organs. In Moser's translation, the phrase 'her sex was the

³²² Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' 71.

³²³ Gramelius, 'A Tradução Da Estrela,' 71.

³²⁴ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 63.

³²⁵ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 70.

³²⁶ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 61.

only vehement sign of her existence' emphasises this reduction even further. In the source text in Portuguese, the narrator describes Macabéa's sex as 'miúdo' (minute), stressing its smallness, which could be interpreted as a reflection of Macabéa's overall insignificance and marginalisation within the narrative. Pontiero's translation remains close to this idea by translating 'miúdo' as 'minute,' maintaining the focus on the physical smallness that characterises Macabéa's existence. Conversely, Moser's choice to translate 'miúdo' as 'mute' introduces a significant shift in meaning. While 'mute' does contribute to the theme of silencing and objectification, it diverges from the source's description of Macabéa's sex as small or insignificant. This choice alters the reader's experience, shifting the focus from her physical insignificance to a more abstract notion of her being silenced or deprived of voice. This translation choice adds a layer of interpretation that emphasises Macabéa's lack of agency and her existence as an object within the patriarchal framework, further enhancing and highlighting the novel's theme of 'screaming,' as noted in the previous analysis of the titles and their significance on agency and expression. This portrayal correlates with earlier imagery in the text, where Moser's emphasis on Macabéa's 'cavity-ridden body' can be seen as a metaphor for the silencing and hollowing out of her personhood. The 'holes' in her body are not just physical voids but also symbolic of the voids in her identity and agency, perceived as voids by the masculine gaze that reduces her to a mere object of contemplation and desire. The narrator's fixation on Macabéa's genitalia as the sole marker of her existence reinforces this objectification.

The comparison of these translations demonstrates the impact of lexical choices, negotiating the representation of Macabéa's body and, by extension her agency. While Pontiero's rendering preserves the source's emphasis on physical smallness, Moser's interpretative choice foregrounds silencing, a central theme and motif of the novel. Both sustain Rodrigo's objectification of Macabéa, defined by a constant lacking substance and of voice, reproducing the patriarchal gaze inscribed in the text. However, the interpretative choice of centring communication enhances the central themes of the novel demonstrating its creative performance.

The Masculine Lens in Translation

Considering the shift from the narrator's objectification of Macabéa to the influence of the translator's perspective, it is relevant to explore how gender may play a role in the translation process. Meier et al. have posited that gender can be discerned through a person's language style signature, precisely, through the patterns in which individuals use pronouns, articles, or conjunctions. These patterns are recognised as reliable indicators of social psychological phenomena.³²⁷ However, in the context of translation, it has been demonstrated that translators often adapt their language style to reflect the characteristics of the source text, potentially aligning their linguistic choices more closely with the source author's style.³²⁸ While this adaptation typically applies to structural elements of translation, it raises the question of whether gender might also influence the content and interpretation within a novel. In other words, even when translators convey the same semantic patterns, their identity may subtly inform their translation in ways that impact how the content is perceived and understood.

Recent research, such as the work of Yuying Li, Yuming Zhang, and Qing Qiu, has explored this phenomenon, particularly in the context of Chinese translations of feminist

³²⁷ Tabea Meier and others, '(Not) Lost in Translation: Psychological Adaptation Occurs During Speech Translation', *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 12.1 (2021), pp. 131–42 (131), doi:[10.1177/1948550619899258](https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619899258); Yla R. Tausczik and James W. Pennebaker, 'The Psychological Meaning of Words: LIWC and Computerized Text Analysis Methods,' *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 29.1 (2010), pp. 24–54, doi:[10.1177/0261927X09351676](https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X09351676); Anthony Mulac, James J. Bradac, and Pamela Gibbons, 'Empirical Support for the Gender-as-Culture Hypothesis: An Intercultural Analysis of Male/Female Language Differences,' *Human Communication Research*, 27.1 (2001), pp. 121–52, doi:[10.1111/j.1468-2958.2001.tb00778.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2001.tb00778.x); Matthew L. Newman and others, 'Gender Differences in Language Use: An Analysis of 14,000 Text Samples,' *Discourse Processes*, 45.3 (2008), pp. 211–36, doi:[10.1080/01638530802073712](https://doi.org/10.1080/01638530802073712); H. Andrew Schwartz and others, 'Personality, Gender, and Age in the Language of Social Media: The Open-Vocabulary Approach,' *PLoS ONE*, 8.9 (2013), doi:[10.1371/journal.pone.0073791](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0073791).

³²⁸ Meier et al., '(Not) Lost in Translation,' p. 139.

English novels.³²⁹ While these studies suggest that female translators (as described in the studies) may provide more nuanced and empathetic interpretations of characters, potentially offering a distinct perspective that enriches the translation, it is important to note that these projects are not extensive enough to draw definitive conclusions. Moreover, these studies do not distinguish between sex and gender. However, across these case-study-based investigations, some consistencies emerge, as in Valerie Henitiuk's comparative work of three translations of the *Kagerô nikki*, an aristocratic woman's diary from the Japanese Heian period (8th, 12th century).³³⁰ Henitiuk highlights that, while acknowledging the intricacies that shape a translation, translation can be understood as a practice influenced by the gendered lens of the translator, here also understood as the reader, since there is no fixed meaning and the reading of the source text heavily influences the production of the translation. In this way, male translators and critics may have a tendency to mediate and reinterpret female experiences in ways that do not fully capture the nuances of the source text and its core characteristics, with an unempathetic understanding of the author's perspective.³³¹ In other words, translations where the translator, regardless of gender, disregards the centrality of gender issues as an integral part of the analysis specially in the case of texts shaped by resistance to patriarchal constrictions, are 'violence to the text' as these translators do not place the attention on the woman author's identity and lived experiences, which are integral to the text itself.³³²

Aligning with Henitiuk's argument with regards to the translator's responsibility towards women's writing, this thesis argues that the degree of deconstruction and feminist

³²⁹ Yuying Li and Yuming Zhang, 'A Comparative Study of Novel Translation from the Perspective of Feminist Translation Theory: A Case Study of the Two Chinese Versions of Persuasion,' *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 9.7 (2019), pp. 785–89, doi:[10.17507/tpls.0907.05](https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0907.05); Qing Qiu, 'A Comparative Study of Novel Translation under Feminist Translation Theory: A Case Study of the Two Chinese Versions of To the Lighthouse,' *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 9.6 (2019), pp. 718–23, doi:[10.17507/tpls.0906.16](https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0906.16).

³³⁰ Valerie Henitiuk, 'Translating Woman: Reading the Female through the Male,' *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 44.3 (1999), pp. 469–84 (469), doi:[10.7202/003045ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/003045ar).

³³¹ In here, the studies use the terms 'male' and 'female' to create a binarity that does not distinguish between sex and gender, and which is reproduced in this segment to explain the studies' contents.

³³² Henitiuk, 'Translating Woman,' p. 483.

alignment of the translators plays a significant role in shaping the translation, regardless of gender. A woman translator may still operate within patriarchal frameworks unless she actively deconstructs dominant discourses, while a man translator may engage with the text from a feminist perspective. Therefore, the emphasis is placed not on the translator's gender or sex but on their critical engagement with gender and power structures. Thus, the following analysis examines how both translations of Lispector's work subtly feminise the character of Macabéa, suggesting the influence of a patriarchal gaze. This feminisation seems to stem from an underlying reinforcement of gendered perceptions embedded in the translation process. By analysing specific passages, this thesis will explore how this subtle patriarchal gaze manifests and assess its implications for the portrayal of Macabéa, revealing how entrenched patriarchal narratives can influence translations that otherwise aim to remain close to the source text. For example, this can be seen in the following passages:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
[...] alma que não cabe bem no corpo, mesmo alma rala como a sua. Imaginavazinha, toda supersticiosa [...]. ³³³	[...] a soul that doesn't quite match its body, even a delicate soul like hers. Being very superstitious, the girl imagined [...]. ³³⁴	[...] a soul that doesn't quite fit into the body, even a flimsy soul like hers. In her little superstitious imaginings, she thought [...]. ³³⁵

In this passage, Lispector describes Macabéa's 'alma rala,' a descriptor conveying the idea of a thin or insubstantial soul, fragile and lacking in density. Pontiero's translation renders this a 'delicate soul,' which aligns with stereotypical gendered notions of femininity, thereby

³³³ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 28.

³³⁴ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 31.

³³⁵ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, pp. 23-4.

softening the more existential connotation of ‘rala’ as something sparse or insubstantial. By feminising Macabéa in this way, the translation aligns her with a conventional, passive idea of womanhood, flattening Lispector’s portrayal and reinforcing binary gender aesthetics. Moser’s version opts for a ‘flimsy soul,’ which adheres more closely to the source text, preserving the sense of fragility while moving away from the overtly feminine connotations of Pontiero’s use of ‘delicate.’ However, as Esteve notes, ‘flimsy’ is not typically used to describe liquids, as ‘rala’ does, and instead leans towards meanings associated with fragility or physical slightness.³³⁶ Although ‘flimsy’ captures the lack of substance in Macabéa’s soul, it still retains a subtle connection to femininity, which limits the interpretation of her character. Esteve proposes ‘thin soul’ as a more accurate translation since it better reflects the idea of something diluted or lacking density while avoiding gendered implications.³³⁷ This option, departing from both translations which ground Macabéa’s ontology more firmly in gendered configurations, opens up the possibility for a new text that engages with the imaginary of *A Hora da Estrela*, while potentially liberating Macabéa from such portrayal.

Lispector’s use of ‘Imaginavazinha, toda supersticiosa’ is also notable for its expressive neologism, where the suffix ‘-inha’ diminishes the capacity for imagination, portraying Macabéa as having a limited or childlike mental faculty.³³⁸ This portrayal presents a challenge to translate, as it conveys not only a diminutive sense of imagination but also subtly mocks Macabéa’s naivety and simplicity. Pontiero’s translation, ‘Being very superstitious, the girl imagined,’ and Moser’s ‘In her little superstitious imaginings, she thought,’ both adopt more conventional approaches. A translation that seeks to replicate Lispector’s linguistic innovation might consider adapting the neologism through a suffix in the target language, such as translating ‘Imaginavazinha’ to ‘Microimagined.’ This approach is particularly relevant when dealing with Lispector’s work because her writing is often described as ‘awkward’ or unconventional, challenging the norms of language and style. Replicating this disruption in English would be a crucial translative process that preserves the source’s subversive nature. Just as Moser occasionally diverges from safeguarding

³³⁶ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 666.

³³⁷ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 666.

³³⁸ Esteves, ‘Uma discussão,’ p. 666.

Lispector's unique voice and linguistic style, it is crucial for a feminist translation to prioritise the transcription of her linguistic subversion. The semiotic deconstruction of formalist, masculine structures within a language in the source text is weakened in the provided translations, where the radical nature of Lispector's prose is somewhat diluted. A similar mediation occurs in the translation of the passage:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
[...] teve tanto medo que se mijou toda . ³³⁹	[...] she got such a shock that she wet her knickers . ³⁴⁰	[...] she was so afraid she wet her pants . ³⁴¹

In this instance, Lispector uses the phrase 'se mijou toda,' where 'mijar' is a highly vulgar term, almost exclusively associated with masculine speech, creating a strong contrast when applied to Macabéa. Pontiero's translation, consistent with his target-culture orientation, negotiates this vulgar register by opting for the more conventional and outdated option of 'she wet her knickers.' The choice of 'knickers' is not only more polite but also infantilising, portraying Macabéa as childlike and potentially adding a comic effect. In contrast, Moser's translation, 'she wet her pants,' maintains a directness that aligns more closely with the source text's cultural context. However, Moser's choice also slightly softens the bluntness of the source by specifying that Macabéa 'wet her pants,' rather than capturing the full force of 'toda,' which implies that she was completely soaked. Both translations, therefore, mitigate the harshness of Lispector's language, subtly reshaping the act into something more palatable and less vulgar, thereby imposing a portrayal of femininity that tempers the source's rawness.

³³⁹ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 49.

³⁴⁰ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 54-5.

³⁴¹ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 46.

These examples highlight how the translations soften the bluntness of Lispector's language, whether through infantilising language or by altering the scope of the source's vulgarity. This softening can be seen as a subtle form of gendered mediation, where the translators align with more traditional representations of femininity, even when the source text resists such portrayals. However, some interesting examples can be drawn from the differences between the translations, as it can be seen in the following passage:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
[...] ela como uma cadela vadia era teleguiada exclusivamente por si mesma. ³⁴²	[...] like some vagrant bitch she was guided entirely by her own remote control. ³⁴³	[...] she like a stray dog was guided exclusively by herself. ³⁴⁴

In this abstract, Lispector's use of 'cadela vadia' is particularly significant because it operates on multiple levels of meaning, both literal and figurative. On the surface, 'cadela vadia' translates to 'stray dog,' an image that evokes notions of abandonment, marginalisation, and vulnerability. However, the phrase also carries a profoundly derogatory connotation when used to describe a woman, akin to calling her a 'bitch' in English. This duality is crucial in understanding how Lispector's language functions not only to describe Macabéa's social status but also to portray how women are dehumanised and objectified within patriarchal discourse. Pontiero's translation of 'cadela vadia' as 'vagrant bitch' effectively captures both the literal meaning of a stray dog and the figurative, gendered insult. By doing so, Pontiero preserves the aggression and dehumanisation inherent in the source in Portuguese, reinforcing the masculine gaze of the narrator. This choice is

³⁴² Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 16.

³⁴³ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 18.

³⁴⁴ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 10.

significant because it highlights the power dynamics at play: Macabéa is not just a stray or a marginalised figure; she is actively demeaned and controlled through the use of derogatory language. In contrast, Moser’s translation as ‘stray dog’ significantly alters the impact of the passage. By opting for a more neutral term, Moser removes the explicit gendered insult, thereby stripping the text of its critical commentary on how language can be weaponised against women. While ‘stray dog’ still conveys Macabéa’s marginalisation and outsider status, it fails to describe the same level of dehumanisation. This translation choice softens the impact of Lispector’s source text, missing an opportunity to explore the power dynamics embedded in the language. This dissonance between texts is further marked in some examples which reflect the translation’s clear departure from the source text by presenting a patriarchal lens in their text:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Uma colega de quarto não sabia como avisar-lhe que seu cheiro era murrinhento. E como não sabia, ficou por isso mesmo, pois tinha medo de ofendê-la . ³⁴⁵	Her room-mates didn’t have the courage to tell her about her stale body odour. And since she herself seemed to be oblivious of the fact, they were afraid of hurting her feelings . ³⁴⁶	A roommate never knew how to tell her she smelled stale. And because she didn’t know how, she left it at that, since she didn’t want to hurt her feelings . ³⁴⁷

In this instance, Lispector’s use of ‘ofendê-la,’ which means ‘to offend,’ suggests a sense of pride or honour that another’s actions could hurt. While this term is not inherently gendered, its connotations may lean towards masculine ideas of pride and dignity. However, both

³⁴⁵ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 24.

³⁴⁶ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 26.

³⁴⁷ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 19.

Pontiero and Moser shift the focus from offence to ‘feelings,’ aligning more closely with stereotypically feminine concerns. This choice reflects a gendered lens that redirects the narrative towards a feminine spectrum correlating the societal expectations for a woman. A particularly striking difference is how each translation handles the placement of blame for the miscommunication. Pontiero diverges significantly from Lispector and Moser by adding the phrase ‘she herself seemed to be oblivious of the fact,’ attributing the cause of the issue to Macabéa’s ignorance. In Pontiero’s version, the roommate’s fear of offending Macabéa becomes a concern, further alienating Macabéa by portraying her as the source of the problem. This alteration not only changes the dynamics between the characters but also perpetuates the underlying patriarchal narrative, subtly reinforcing the notion that Macabéa, as the repressed figure who, partly due to her extreme alienation even within her closest relations, is responsible for her own marginalisation. Another translation that reveals the conflict of Macabéa’s feminisation can be seen in:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
[...] alguma coisa na cara quase sorridente da datilógrafa [...] ³⁴⁸	Something in her docile expression [...] ³⁴⁹	[...] something in the typist’s almost smiling face [...] ³⁵⁰

In this excerpt, Lispector’s source text describes, ‘alguma coisa na cara quase sorridente da datilógrafa,’ which is translated quite differently by Pontiero and Moser, revealing the interpretive choices that reflect the translators’ differing approaches to Macabéa’s characterisation. Pontiero’s version offers this as ‘something in her docile expression,’ representing a significant departure from the source text. The term ‘docile’ imposes a

³⁴⁸ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 22.

³⁴⁹ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 24.

³⁵⁰ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 16.

gendered interpretation that diminishes the complexity of Macabéa's character. By describing her expression as 'docile,' Pontiero reduces Macabéa to a passive, submissive figure, a stereotype of traditional femininity. This choice suggests a level of compliance and softness that is not explicitly present in the source text. The 'almost smiling face' that Lispector describes carries an ambiguity: Macabéa's expression is on the verge of something but does not fully realise it, which resonates with her broader portrayal as an 'almost' being, incomplete and unfulfilled. Moser's translation, conversely, describes it as 'something in the typist's almost smiling face,' staying closer to Lispector's source text. By preserving the 'almost smiling' quality, Moser retains the ambiguity and the sense of an incomplete or suspended emotion. This aligns with one of the novel's core themes, where many elements exist in a state of 'almost,' never fully realised or completed. Macabéa's 'almost smiling face' mirrors the narrative's recurring motif of things that are almost but not quite; bells that 'almost ring.' Ultimately, Pontiero's choice to opt for 'docile' not only strips away this thematic depth but also imposes a gendered interpretation that oversimplifies Macabéa's character. The docility ascribed to her in translation reinforces the stereotype of passive femininity, whereas Lispector's source text suggests something more complex and less easily categorised. In contrast, Moser's translation maintains Lispector's ambiguity, allowing the 'almost' to speak to Macabéa's broader existential condition.

While the coincidental fact that both English translations of *A Hora da Estrela* were produced by men does not itself dictate their interpretative choices, what emerges in both versions is a tendency to reinscribe gendered dynamics, often through the subtle feminisation of Lispector's text. This alignment with broader patterns noted in Feminist Translation research underscores how translation, even unconsciously, can reproduce prevailing cultural frameworks. Pontiero's case stands out particularly with regards to this, as the adaptive strategies he employs serve to anchor the text firmly within patriarchal lenses, reflecting an accommodation to the literary norms and expectations of the target culture. While not inherently inevitable, these effects demonstrate how Lispector's subversive writing style risks being undermined unless a translator consciously resists the gravitational pull of normative language in the target culture. This does not suggest that men translators cannot produce feminist or resistant translations, but rather highlights that, in these specific instances, the translations mirror dominant cultural currents to different degrees, than amplifying Lispector's radical disruptions.

Giovanni Pontiero and Feminine Agency: A Struggle

It has been established that the masculine lens imposed through language influences the translations and modulates the portrayal of characters, leading to inevitable distortions, emphases, and altered readings. The analysis of Pontiero and Moser's translations offers a revealing insight into how linguistic choices can significantly affect the portrayal of Macabéa's character, particularly regarding her agency and intellectual capacity. However, a critical difference between both translators' translations lies in how feminine agency is portrayed. This section explores how Pontiero's translation particularly undermines feminine agency, offering a reading that subtly yet significantly alters the source text's portrayal of Macabéa:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
[...] não aprovasse na linguagem duas consoantes juntas [...] ³⁵¹	[...] she appeared to have some difficulty in stringing two consonants together [...] ³⁵²	[...] she didn't approve of two consonants together [...] ³⁵³

In these abstracts, Rodrigo establishes that Macabéa disapproves of a linguistic detail: two consonants appearing together. This is significant because it is one of the rare occurrences in the novel in which Macabéa demonstrates an opinion or a personal boundary within the realm of language, an interesting dynamic considering that she is a character crafted through

³⁵¹ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 13.

³⁵² Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 15.

³⁵³ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 7.

language. However, Pontiero’s translation, ‘even though she appeared to have some difficulty stringing two consonants together,’ undermines this subtle assertion of agency. Instead of portraying Macabéa as someone with a linguistic preference, the translation depicts her as someone struggling with language itself. This shift from preference to incapacity diminishes her intellectual agency and reinforces a stereotypical power dynamic between the narrator and Macabéa, where the narrator (and, by extension, the reader) is placed in a position of superiority over her. In contrast, Moser’s translation stays closer to Lispector’s effect, preserving Macabéa’s agency. By maintaining the element of disapproval rather than incompetence, Moser’s version respects the character’s subtle complexities, suggesting that even within her limitations, Macabéa has her own set of standards or discomforts. Following:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
E arrumara um jeito de achar nas coisas simples e honestas a graça de um pecado [...] ³⁵⁴	She had contrived a way of finding grace in simple, authentic things [...] ³⁵⁵	And she’s figured out how to find in simple and honest things the grace of a sin [...] ³⁵⁶

The translations in these excerpts differ significantly in conveying Macabéa’s relationship with pleasure and sin. Lispector’s source text and Moser’s translation suggest that Macabéa has found a way to derive grace, or a sense of divine pleasure, from simple and honest things. Yet, this pleasure is paradoxically akin to the grace of a sin. This subtle contradiction

³⁵⁴ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p. 56.

³⁵⁵ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 62.

³⁵⁶ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 54.

highlights Macabéa's complex and conflicted religious scale, deeply intertwined with her experience of pleasure and morality. Pontiero's translation, however, omits the notion of 'the grace of a sin' entirely, thus removing the religious and moral conflict central to Macabéa's character in this passage. By doing so, Pontiero's version simplifies Macabéa's experience, reducing the depth of her character and overlooking the intricate ways in which her religious upbringing and her understanding of pleasure intersect. This omission results in a flatter, less nuanced portrayal, missing an opportunity to explore the complexities of Macabéa's internal world. Another difference takes place in Pontiero's version that affects the relationship between Olímpico and Macabéa is found in:

Clarice Lispector	Giovanni Pontiero	Benjamin Moser
Afinal terminou por voltar para ela [...] ³⁵⁷	They eventually bumped into each other again [...] ³⁵⁸	He ended up coming back to her [...] ³⁵⁹

The portrayal of Olímpico's return to Macabéa is crucial in understanding her romantic agency and the dynamics of their relationship. Lispector's text and Moser's translation suggest that Olímpico feels compelled to return to Macabéa, implying that she has a certain allure or quality that draws him back. This suggestion of attraction, even if ultimately unfulfilled or misaligned, grants Macabéa a form of romantic agency, positioning her as someone who, at least temporarily, holds some influence over Olímpico. Pontiero's translation downplays this agency by describing the encounter as a mere accident, with Olímpico and Macabéa 'bumping into each other again.' This portrayal strips Macabéa of any romantic influence or appeal, rendering her passive in the relationship dynamic. By framing their reunion as an accident, Pontiero's version foreshadows their eventual

³⁵⁷ Lispector, *A Hora da Estrela*, p.

³⁵⁸ Pontiero (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 53.

³⁵⁹ Moser (trans.), *The Hour of the Star*, p. 44.

separation and reinforces a narrative where Macabéa's value is diminished, aligning with a more patriarchal interpretation of the text.

Pontiero's translation often simplifies or conventionalises Macabéa's character, aligning her more closely with traditional, patriarchal values and reducing the complex interplay of language, power, and identity that Lispector constructs. Pontiero's tendency to modulate Lispector's language into more conventional, gendered terms is evident throughout his translation. By translating ambiguous or complex emotions into simplified, gendered expressions, Pontiero inadvertently reinforces traditional gender roles and diminishes the agency of feminine characters. This pattern is particularly problematic in a text like Lispector's, where the complexity and ambiguity of women's experiences are central themes. As observed in this thesis section, Pontiero's translation often replaces Lispector's more neutral or ambiguous terms with words that carry connotations of passivity and submission. This alters the reader's perception of Macabéa and reflects a broader tendency in his translation to conform to patriarchal norms. The result is a portrayal of Macabéa that departs from an exploration of her unique ontological status as an 'almost' being and instead is assumed into normative frameworks. In contrast, Moser's translation tends to preserve the subtle nuances of the source text, maintaining Macabéa's agency and the existential depth of her character, while still demonstrating instances of patriarchal influence. These differences highlight the importance of careful, context-sensitive translation, particularly when dealing with texts that challenge dominant narratives and explore the intricacies of identity and agency.

The comparative reading of *A hora da Estrela* and both *The Hour of the Star* ultimately demonstrates how translation not only mediates but also reconstitutes the feminist subversive quality of Lispector's prose. Each text is a collapse of the imaginary *A Hora da Estrela*, as they remain entangled throughout the analyses and each foreground the different negotiations and subversions of patriarchal structures. Lispector's text remains the most uncompromising articulation of feminist resistance; its linguistic characteristics and narrative devices consistently dismantle normative gendered hierarchies present in the context. Moser's translation is placed then closest to this radicality, presenting some of the disruptive force found in Lispector's syntax and thematic focus, yet it is also subtly subdued to linguistic patriarchal constructs that affect its discursive strategies. Pontiero, conversely, while introducing Lispector to a new readership, provides a text that reshapes and feminises

Lispector's textual ruptures in ways that restrain women's agency and render the novel more legible within dominant patriarchal norms of the period. Taken together, these three iterations provide a spectrum of feminist subversion, each exposing to different degrees the constricts and flaws of patriarchal power dynamics.

4. How to be both/Com Ser-ho Alhora

Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* is a novel that interrogates assumptions about identity and narrative form. Its experimental structure, with two intertwined narratives that can be read in either order, disrupts conventional expectations of structure and content while opening space for questions of subjectivity and power. At its centre is the concept of 'bothness,' which provides a compelling notion to explore the fluidity of identity and the intersectional feminist potential of challenging essentialist binary frameworks, subverting gender expectations and roles. In this bothness, we also find *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, the Catalan translation by Maria Dolors Udina i Abelló. Both texts are understood here as part of a system in the same way as *A Hora da Estrela* and both *The Hour of Star*, stand as great examples of intersectional feminist practice and a relevant case to be made about the migration of a text interested in gender from a language without grammatical gender (English) into one that encodes it (Catalan).

One half of the novel follows George, who navigates grief after the loss of her mother and undergoes a process of introjection, shaping her identity by internalising her mother's influence. This process, when compared to the projection system seen in *A Hora da Estrela*, offers a different process of subjectification in relation to the Other. In contrast to the opposition between the characters in *A Hora da Estrela*, *How to Be Both* stages a negotiation of power dynamics that allows both characters to exist within and beyond conventional frameworks without obliteration in its resolution. George's narrative also explores her mother Carol's resistance to labels such as 'mother' and 'wife,' challenging the restrictions imposed by social expectations. The other half of the novel follows Francescho, born female but living as a man in order to pursue a career as an artist in Renaissance Italy. Francescho's defiance of gender norms through mastery of gender offers an alternative to monolithic understandings of identity, foregrounding Smith's interest in fluidity and gender performance. Altogether, George and Francescho's narratives position the novel as a critical text for exploring the constructed nature of subjectivity and its negotiation within cis-heteropatriarchal frameworks. Smith's experimental techniques analysed in this chapter, such as shifting between prose and poetic registers, the disrupting of order of narratives, and the questioning of narrative authority, further expand on the topics of interest explored in *A*

Hora da Estrela, offering insights here on techniques that challenge patriarchal frameworks of identity and question politics of representation.

4.1 Ali Smith, *How to be Both*, Maria Dolors Udina i Abelló, *Com Ser-ho Alhora*

Scottish novelist Ali Smith's *How to be Both* was initially released by Hamish Hamilton in 2014 and has garnered significant recognition, earning awards such as the 2014 Costa Book Award, the 2014 Goldsmiths Prize, and the 2015 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction, among others.³⁶⁰ The novel, divided into two perspectives, features Francescho del Cossa, an Italian Renaissance artist, and George, a 16-year-old girl in contemporary Cambridge grappling with her mother's death. Distinctively, *How to be Both* is published in two different editions where the reading order of these two perspectives is reversed: in one version, George's narrative comes first, while in the other, Francescho's does. This structural decision underscores the novel's thematic focus on duality and fluidity, aligning with the concept of 'bothness' inherent in the title.

Smith explores this notion of duality in both form and content, challenging conventional narrative sequences. In an interview with National Public Radio, she explained how the interchangeable structure questions traditional novelistic conventions of sequence, consequence, and morality:

³⁶⁰ Tim Masters, 'Baileys Prize: Ali Smith Wins for How to Be Both,' *BBC News*, 3 June 2015, section Entertainment & Arts <<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-32995243>> [accessed 10 November 2022]; Ali Smith, 'Costa Novel Award 2014: How to Be Both by Ali Smith,' *The Guardian*, 6 January 2015, section Books <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jan/06/costa-novel-award-2014-how-to-be-both-ali-smith>> [accessed 10 November 2022]; 'The Goldsmiths Prize 2014,' *Goldsmiths, University of London* <<https://www.gold.ac.uk/goldsmiths-prize/prize2014/>> [accessed 10 November 2022].

I think it really changes the notion of a narrative to look at something coming first which otherwise might come second. It's a questioning of the very structure of the novel, which is really about, as Margaret Atwood says, one damn thing after another. You know, that's what plot is. It's like a further nudge to the novel to ask about the ways in which sequence and consequence work 'cause I have a feeling the moral of the novel, in a way, is consequence, and that the novel has a very moral form. I wanted to see what happened when we shuffled that notion of consequence.³⁶¹

By constructing two interchangeable narratives that blur the lines between past, present, and future, Smith breaks away from the linearity that typically defines storytelling, leaning instead into simultaneity.³⁶² The novel's central idea of bothness engages readers in a dialogue about narrative structure, morality, and how stories unfold.

This concept of duality and the questioning of linear narrative structures had been introduced for exploration in the tradition of British experimental writing from the mid-20th century. Authors like B.S. Johnson, Christine Brooke-Rose, and Bridget Brophy challenged conventional storytelling by experimenting with fragmentation and linearity.³⁶³ Smith's work, much like theirs, seeks to disrupt traditional narrative expectations, often

³⁶¹ Ali Smith, 'Art And Death Are Two Things At Once In 'How To Be Both,' 2014 <<https://www.npr.org/2014/11/29/367362530/art-and-death-are-two-things-at-once-in-how-to-be-both>> [accessed 15 February 2023].

³⁶² Daniel Lea, 'Ali Smith,' in *Twenty-First-Century Fiction: Contemporary British Voices*, ed. by Daniel Lea (Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 26–73 (62), doi:[10.7228/manchester/9780719081491.003.0002](https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719081491.003.0002).

³⁶³ Some examples include B. S. Johnson, *The Unfortunates* (New Directions Publishing, 2007), a book-in-a-box with 27 chapters that can be read in any possible order; Christine Brooke-Rose, *The Christine Brooke-Rose Omnibus: Four Novels: Out, Such, Between, Thru* (Carcenet Press, Limited, 2007) a collection of experimental novels that disrupt language and structure; Brigid Brophy, *In Transit: An Heroi-Cyclic Novel* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2002), a linguistically playful narrative set in an airport that explores puns, multilingual wordplay, and grammatical experimentation. These are some examples that experiment with form and disrupt linearity.

incorporating metafictional elements that draw attention to the act of storytelling itself. As such, *How to be Both* stands as a contemporary continuation of these experimental techniques, pushing the boundaries of form while inviting readers to consider the fluidity of identity and experience. The novel's playful use of language, its blending of historical and contemporary elements, and its deep exploration of identity and gender, place it within a literary tradition that seeks to dissolve established boundaries and create something new and thought-provoking. This approach is reminiscent of Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts*, which similarly interrogates notions of gender and sexuality, particularly through the fluidity in the relationship between Nelson and Harry, as Harry transitions from woman to man while Nelson explores her bisexuality.³⁶⁴ Both works introduce complex questions surrounding gender and sexuality, though *The Argonauts* focuses on the parental figure, whereas *How to Be Both* examines these themes through the lens of the children.

This central theme of duality in the novel also offers insight into the experience of reading translations. The novel's disruption of order between its two versions, where the narrative sequence varies depending on the edition, parallels the experience of re-reading a translated work. Just as the concept of duality underpins the novel's structure, translation inherently involves a form of multiplicity, as a text exists in both its source language and its translation, expanding the system of texts and entangling them. Like readers of *How to be Both*, who may or may not be aware of the alternate narrative order, readers of a translation experience a version of the text that is distinct yet connected to the source text, producing a reading that is both familiar and different. This fluidity in the sequencing of narratives highlights the potential to deconstruct the traditional power dynamics between source texts and their translations, as it undermines the relevance of the sequence of order. Through the lens of *How to Be Both*, reading a translation elevates the status of both texts, positioning them on an equal footing while preserving their differences. In this way, Smith's novel not only comments on the concepts of causality and sequence, as she notes in interviews, but also mimics the power dynamics inherent in translation and other processes shaped by sequence and order. It is also worth considering whether reading *How to be Both* in its source in English or in translation leads the multilingual reader to experience 'both' differently,

³⁶⁴ Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (Graywolf Press, 2015).

similar to how a reader engaging with the two English editions might. A multilingual readership, capable of engaging with the novel across multiple languages, has the potential to have a unique interaction with the text, experiencing subversions of direction and causality on an additional linguistic level. Conversely, a monolingual reader can approximate this experience by reading both English versions, challenging the existing hierarchy that often positions the source text as superior. For the comparative examination in this chapter, it is relevant to note that the translation, *Com ser-ho Alhora*, was published in two editions, each reversing the narrative order in the same way as *How to Be Both*. For clarity, this study will refer to the version where George's story is presented first in both languages.

The interplay between duality, narrative sequence, and translation foreground the translator as a co-creator of the work's multiplicity. In this case, it is Maria Dolors Udina i Abelló, a remarkable literary translator and associate professor of translation at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). With over 200 published translations, her work spans a wide array of genres, from poetry to essays and translation theory. Many of her translations are of prominent authors extensively discussed within feminist discourse, including Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, and Ali Smith. This association suggests a familiarity with feminist thought and its reflection in literature, which may have influenced her approach to translating *How to be Both*. Udina i Abelló's contributions to translation have earned her numerous accolades, including the Crítica Serra d'Or in 2014, the Ciutat de Barcelona Prize in 2017, the Creu de Sant Jordi in 2018, and the National Award for the Obra d'un Traductor.

Despite its vibrant translation history, particularly in terms of the contributions of women translators, Catalonia has only recently attracted significant academic interest in this area. Catalan scholarship has long engaged with translation studies, producing substantial research and publications, including specialised journals like *Quaderns*, in 1998. Within *Quaderns*, some articles address the contributions of Catalan women translators, which note the rich heritage within the context yet remain largely explorable as a significant amount of scholarly work is focused outside Catalonia. For instance, Caterina Riba Sanmartí's article highlights the work of Catalan poets and translators Montserrat Abelló and Maria-Mercè Marçal, who played a key role in shaping a feminist literary canon by engaging with and

focusing on internationally relevant women authors.³⁶⁵ Similarly, Victòria Alsina i Keith has examined Maria-Antònia Oliver's translation of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, another example of feminist translation at work.³⁶⁶ One of the most influential figures in this field is Pilar Godayol, who has published extensively on Catalan women translators, including an article on Maria-Mercè Marçal.³⁶⁷ Godayol's book *Feminismos y traducción* (1965-1990) examines how translation was instrumental in challenging the national-Catholic model of femininity during the late Francoist and post-Francoist periods.³⁶⁸ She argues that translation helped feminise the literary canon and foster a transnational feminist sentiment that continues to influence contemporary feminism. In *Espais De Frontera: Gènere i Traducció*, Godayol further explores the relationship between women and translation, focusing on the concept of borderlands: cultural spaces where new literatures and ideas emerge and where the act of translation becomes a form of (re)thinking, (re)defining, and (re)writing as a woman.³⁶⁹ Additionally, the *Grup d'Estudi de la Traducció Catalana Contemporània* (GETCC), to which she is a member, founded in 2009, has made significant contributions to the study of Catalan translations. Their work, encompassing theoretical, linguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural perspectives, has helped bring greater attention to a previously under-explored area of Catalan translation history.³⁷⁰

While Catalan translation, particularly the role of women Catalan translators, has garnered some academic interest within the local context, it has yet to gain significant

³⁶⁵ Caterina Riba Sanmartí, 'La Creació D'una Genealogia Femenina Mitjançant La Traducció : Maria-Mercè Marçal I Montserrat Abelló,' *Quaderns: Revista de Traducció*, 22 (2015), pp. 205–15 <<http://hdl.handle.net/10854/4231>>.

³⁶⁶ Victòria Alsina i Keith, 'La Traducció de l'estil. The Waves, de Virginia Woolf, Traduït per Maria-Antònia Oliver,' *Quaderns: Revista de Traducció*, 21, 2014, pp. 85–105 <<https://www.raco.cat/index.php/QuadernsTraduccio/article/view/284074>>.

³⁶⁷ Pilar Godayol, 'Triplement Subalternes,' *Quaderns: Revista de Traducció*, 15 (2008), pp. 41–50 <<http://dspace.uvic.cat/xmlui/handle/10854/3111>>.

³⁶⁸ Pilar Godayol, *Feminismos y Traducción (1965-1990)* (Punctum, 2020).

³⁶⁹ Pilar Godayol, *Espais De Frontera: Gènere i Traducció* (Eumo, 2000).

³⁷⁰ 'Grup d'Estudi de La Traducció Catalana Contemporània,' *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* <<https://webs.uab.cat/getcc/en/>> [accessed 9 September 2024].

recognition on a global scale. This lack of visibility can be attributed to the translators' intersectional position within two non-hegemonic groups (women and Catalans) which places them at a doubly marginalised juncture.³⁷¹ As women and speakers of a minority language, they face structural inequalities that have historically undermined their contributions. The marginalisation of these translators reflects broader power dynamics in gender and linguistic hierarchies, where men-dominated fields and dominant languages are often privileged over the voices of women and those from less globally influential linguistic communities. Montserrat Bacardí and Pilar Godayol acknowledged in their 2014 publication 'Catalan Women Translators: An Introductory Overview' that their research was the first in-depth study of women Catalan translators and their work.³⁷² The fact that such research only emerged relatively recently underscores the long-standing neglect of this topic in academia, with attention limited to a few prominent figures. This thesis seeks to expand upon the foundational work of Bacardí and Godayol, offering further analysis of the contributions of Catalan women translators. By exploring their strategies, methods, and cultural contexts, this research aims to highlight their critical but under-recognised role in shaping literature in Catalan and the broader field of translation studies.

4.2 How to Be Both and Com Ser-Ho Alhora: A Comparative Analysis

Following the introduction to *How to Be Both* and *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, as well as to both author and translator, this chapter now proceeds to a detailed analysis of the texts' narrative and linguistic strategies. *How to be Both* carefully examines and subverts the

³⁷¹ Montserrat Bacardí and Pilar Godayol, 'Catalan Women Translators: An Introductory Overview,' *The Translator*, 20.2 (2014), pp. 144–61 (144), doi:[10.1080/13556509.2014.968327](https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2014.968327).

³⁷² Bacardí and Godayol, 'Catalan women translators,' p. 157; Please note that this was published three years after the realisation of the *Dictionary of Catalan Translation*, also edited by them, which reveals how the academic progress is leading to an interest towards feminist influence: *Diccionari de la Traducció Catalana*, ed. by Montserrat Bacardí and Pilar Godayol (Eumo Editorial SAU, 2011).

dynamics imposed by models of self-projection and othering, which are the topics of interest for this section of the thesis. Smith's style is well recognised for embracing fragmentation and multi-perspectivism to depict the collapse of authoritarian voices in contemporary discourses, which is acknowledged to assume the construct of a single voice that rejects.³⁷³ For example, in *Autumn*, Smith employs a variety of perspectives to engage with contemporary social and political issues such as Brexit, immigration, and nationalism. Through the character of Elisabeth, a young woman disillusioned by the political system and mainstream media, Smith critiques the biased narratives perpetuated by these institutions. In contrast, Daniel, an art historian, provides an alternative lens by sharing his reflections with Elisabeth, and both reflect on how art can serve as a medium to challenge dominant ideologies and stimulate critical thinking. Their dialogues reflect Smith's broader thematic concern with the subversion of authoritative discourses through multiple perspectives.

To disrupt traditional sources of authority and representation, Smith employs non-linear narratives, experimental dialogue forms, and unexpected perspective shifts. In *How to be Both*, these techniques manifest through George and Carol's conversations, which bring multi-perspectivism to authoritative discourses, directly challenging politics and art. Smith's subversion of narrative structure is part of her broader project to destabilise linear and hierarchical storytelling, making space for polyphony. While these strategies are not entirely novel in literary history, they remain highly relevant in contemporary fiction. This relates to Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination*, where he establishes how multiple perspectives can symbolise the breakdown of authoritarian voices.³⁷⁴ He suggests that when multiple voices or perspectives, each representing different ideologies, beliefs, and values, are present, they collectively challenge the dominance of a singular, authoritative voice. In particular, Bakhtin explores the discourse surrounding heteroglossia and its significance in rendering the novel a dialogic instrument, as it thrives through the interaction of a multiplicity of voices and perspectives that precisely undermine the rigid and singular authoritative discourse.³⁷⁵ Thus,

³⁷³ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 27.

³⁷⁴ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 263-422.

³⁷⁵ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 263-422.

Smith's work, in this context, reflects traditional aspects of the novel as Bakhtin described, particularly in its use of polyphony to challenge monolithic structures of power. However, Smith also extends this tradition through her non-linear and experimental narrative techniques, which diverge from Bakhtin's more linear historical examples. Her novels, like *How to be Both*, not only present a variety of perspectives but also dismantle the conventional structures of time and sequence, pushing the boundaries of what multi-perspectivism can achieve in both form and content.

Smith's works are characterised by a multiplicity of voices, each competing to be heard, forming a dynamic tension between contrasting perspectives. These voices depict individual realities but refrain from imposing one character's experience as definitive for others. For instance, in *The Accidental*, the Smart family experiences a disruption of perspectives: Eve (mother), Michael (husband), Astrid (daughter), and Magnus (son) all offer different viewpoints on the events that unfold. A relevant conflict emerges in the parents' view of Magnus' prank, a prank which led to a classmate's suicide, clashing with Magnus' deep remorse and search for redemption. Rather than aligning the family under a single narrative, Smith emphasises the discord between their perspectives, celebrating the plurality and the autonomy of each character's viewpoint, precisely enhancing this collision of perspectives through the disruptive introduction of an uninvited guest (Amber) who sets off a chain of events that reveals the underlying tensions within the family. Similarly, *Winter* brings together a family in Cornwall for the Christmas season, presenting a wide range of distinct perspectives on their relationships, which is enhanced through the introduction of a stranger (Lux), invited by the adult son of the family (Arthur), and who unexpectedly plays a role in uniting the family. However, *How to be Both* takes this concept of multi-perspectivism even further and in a new direction. Unlike in Smith's previous works, where characters interact directly with one another, in *How to be Both*, the characters (George, a teenager in contemporary England, and Francescho, a Renaissance painter in Italy) are separated physically, temporally, and literally. The novel pushes Smith's exploration of interconnection to its limit: here, the characters do not influence each other directly but rather shape the reader's understanding of them. This distinctiveness is reinforced by the novel's structure, where the two characters' stories are presented in separate sections that alternate across editions. This physical and narrative separation creates a unique form of bothness: the novel balances individual introspection and mutual influence despite the characters' lack of direct interaction. The formal separation between the two stories, physically (in distinct

sections and countries) and temporally (by five centuries), exemplifies Smith's radical approach to narrative, where meaning is shaped by the reader's engagement with both characters' experiences rather than their direct interaction. Thus, a narrative entanglement takes place where the two protagonists are entangled in their existence and it is not until the ghost of one disrupts the reality of the other, and they 'see' each other, that the system collapses and the encounter is disrupted.

Although *How to be Both* initially establishes clear distinctions between its dual narratives, it ultimately embraces ambiguity and leaves room for multiple interpretations. One notable point of contention is the distinction between Francescho's account and George's role in shaping it. Christopher Benfey argues that George may have authored the entire narrative, with Francescho's perspective serving as a narrative device created by George.³⁷⁶ Benfey's argument hinges on specific linguistic details, though the evidence is inconsistent. For example, he highlights the phrase 'just saying,' which suggests a temporality aligned with the 21st century and could imply George's authorship.³⁷⁷ However, the most substantial evidence for this interpretation appears in a passage narrated from George's point of view:

You'd need your own dead person to come back from the dead. You'd be waiting and waiting for that person to come back. But instead of the person you needed you'd get some dead renaissance painter going on and on about himself and his work and it'd be someone you knew nothing about and that'd be meant to teach you empathy, would it? It's exactly the kind of stunt her mother would pull.³⁷⁸

In this passage, George reflects on the appearance of Francescho, suggesting that the painter's presence may be an act of creative projection orchestrated to fulfil an emotional

³⁷⁶ Christopher Benfey, 'Double Take,' *The New York Times Book Review*, 2015, p. 12.

³⁷⁷ Benfey, 'Double Take,' p. 12.

³⁷⁸ Ali Smith, *How To Be Both* (Penguin Books, 2015), p. 139.

need.³⁷⁹ This interpretation aligns with Benfey's claim, yet the novel does not present definitive proof, preserving the ambiguity of authorship and the blending of narrative voices. Moreover, Francescho's transformation of gender identity mirrors Carol's subversive tendencies and political activism, creating a connection between the two figures.³⁸⁰ This gender transformation also parallels George's story, as both narratives revolve around significant life changes following the death of their mothers. For George, Carol's death profoundly affects the family and catalyses a series of events in her own life, just as Francescho's mother's death leads him to try on her dresses, prompting his father to envision Francescho's future as an artist by adopting a masculine persona. However, this interpretation, that George is the primary voice behind both narratives, contradicts the novel's thematic commitment to 'bothness.'³⁸¹ If George were the singular creator of both stories, it would undermine the novel's random sequencing of events, and the equal significance granted to each narrative. The strength of George's story lies in her ability to juxtapose influence with vulnerability, exploring the interconnected themes of identity, loss, and creation. The characters are required to embrace the paradox of influence without dominance, a core aspect of this work, which allows for multiple interpretations.³⁸²

Another interpretation could extend this idea further: could there not be a '*bothness*' in Francescho's narrative being a co-creation of both George and Carol? In this reading, Francescho is shaped not only by George's imagination but also by the legacy of her mother's influence. In creating Francescho, George could be intentionally replicating Carol's subversive approach to life, rendering Francescho a product of both mother and daughter. This dynamic preserves the concept of bothness, as Francescho's narrative emerges from the intersection of these two voices, enabling layered interpretations and mutual influence. However, in order to fully appreciate the autonomy and authority of each narrative, it becomes necessary to approach the two stories as distinct entities. This framework allows for an exploration of bothness not as a merging of stories but as a

³⁷⁹ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 67.

³⁸⁰ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 67.

³⁸¹ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 67.

³⁸² Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 67.

reflection of the separate yet parallel identities within each narrative, or in other words, they present a paradox that challenges Aristotle's principle of non-contradiction.³⁸³ The following section will then zoom in and examine the narrative voice and authority in George's section, particularly focusing on the power dynamics between Carol and George as an introjection system. This dynamic, reminiscent of the projection structure found in *A Hora da Estrela*, shifts the focus from a resolute projection to a more intricate system of introjection, where George internalises and reflects Carol's influence in shaping her narrative.

Narrative Voice: Authority Over the Narration/Self

The narrative in *How to Be Both* is presented in the third person but is deeply influenced by the protagonist's emotions, blending external narration with George's voice. This is evident from the beginning of George's section, where the narrator states: 'Consider this moral conundrum for a moment, George's mother says to George, who's sitting in the front passenger seat. Not says. Said.'³⁸⁴ The shift from present to past tense highlights George's struggle to confront the reality of her mother's death, and her tendency to reanimate Carol through memories directly impacts the narrative's temporal structure. This disruption reveals the core dynamic that George grapples with throughout the novel: the reanimation of her mother and the process of introjection.

George's journey is marked by a complex system of introjection, where her sense of self is intertwined with her mother. The psychoanalytic concept of introjection explains how individuals internalise external objects or experiences, influencing their sense of self and behaviour. This process can blur the boundary between self and the external world, leading to confusion and emotional challenges, particularly in states of melancholia or depression,

³⁸³ 'Metaphysics,' in Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume Two: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes, trans. by W. D. Ross (Princeton University Press, 1984), Book IV, pp. 1584–99 (1588).

³⁸⁴ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 3.

as discussed by Julia Kristeva.³⁸⁵ For George, this manifests in her inability to fully separate from her mother's death, leading her to engage in rituals that serve as both coping mechanisms and ways of reanimating her mother's influence. While George's actions, such as her daily dancing routine and her obsessive placement of photographs, could be seen as attempts to keep her mother alive, they are also attempts to rebuild her own identity in the face of loss. As Daniel Lea notes in *Twenty-First-Century Fiction: Contemporary British Voices*, George's decision to watch abusive pornographic videos, something her mother detested, could be understood as a ritualistic attempt to reconnect with her mother by embodying her resistance to such content.³⁸⁶ Lea's argument, however, overlooks the duality in George's behaviour. Rather than solely trying to revive Carol, George's actions suggest that she is both assimilating her mother's influence and, simultaneously, coming to terms with the fact that she cannot fully embody her mother. This ambivalence (what can be called the bothness of George's rituals) shows that she is engaged in two seemingly contradictory processes: continuing to internalise and channel her mother's ideals while simultaneously acknowledging that she can never fully become Carol. These rituals serve as a farewell to her mother and a way of continuing her influence. In this way, George maintains Carol's presence and recognises her distinct identity. This ambivalence will be further explored as this section considers narrative voice and authority in relation to George's development.

It is important to note that while the power dynamic in *A Hora da Estrela* centres on the tension between a man and a woman, *How to Be Both* has a segment that focuses on power dynamics between women (George, Carol, and H), and another focused in power dynamics between men (Francesco, his father, and Barto). This marks a transition in the study, moving from an analysis of gendered conflict across a binary spectrum to two explorations that are markedly complicated and influenced by parenthood and intergenerational tension. In the relationship between George and her mother, Carol, George becomes the central figure who influences the narrative while observing her mother from an external, almost reflective perspective. As a teenager, George is in the process of forming

³⁸⁵ Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez, European Perspectives (Columbia University Press, 1989).

³⁸⁶ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 61.

her political consciousness, questioning dominant beliefs, and developing her own form of resistance. Thus, even in death, Carol continues to guide George through feminist principles. An example of this guiding through subversive feminist ideas, Carol echoes Rebecca Solnit's theory on the importance of being lost as a means of liberation from Western culture's obsession with productivity.³⁸⁷ According to Solnit, being lost can serve as a form of resistance, allowing individuals to break free from societal constraints and explore new perspectives.³⁸⁸ This idea is vividly illustrated in Carol's desire to get lost during her trip to Italy, where she intentionally seeks to break free from the demands of productivity and embrace uncertainty. Her journey represents a different approach to experiencing the world, prioritising ambiguity and the unknown as personal and political liberation tools:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
Let's not look anything up , her mother says. It's so nice. Not to have to know. ³⁸⁹	No busquem res , diu la mare. És tan agradable. No haver de saber. ³⁹⁰

As someone with intellectual prowess, Carol understands the concept of attention economy and the overwhelming accessibility of knowledge on the internet, yet she actively rejects this in the narrative.³⁹¹ Simultaneously, Carol is grappling with the emotional aftermath of an

³⁸⁷ Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (Canongate, 2006).

³⁸⁸ Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*.

³⁸⁹ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 60.

³⁹⁰ Ali Smith, *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, trans. by Dolors Udina (Barcelona: Raig Verd Editorial, 2015), pp. 54-5.

³⁹¹ The concept of an economy of attention is first identified by Herbert A. Simon, who argued that the ever-increasing availability of information and knowledge production creates a corresponding scarcity of human attention, which must be selectively allocated among the abundance of

extramarital affair that ended without closure (the other person ceased contact). This lack of explanation gives Carol an unexpected sense of freedom, as she is relieved from emotional entanglement or need for understanding. In fact, Carol expresses a deliberate detachment from the affair, believing that her daughter, George, neither needs to know nor should know about it. This decision to withhold knowledge emphasises the narrative's exploration of freedom through the act of 'not knowing.' Carol's perspective on knowledge echoes ideas found in Cixous' work. According to Cixous, knowledge is often a product of patriarchal thought, which is limiting in its nature, as it defines, categorises, and constrains, making it challenging to envision true freedom.³⁹² Cixous argues that for women to achieve liberation, they must break away from this restrictive man-dominated mode of knowing and instead embrace the fluidity and multiplicity of identity.³⁹³ This reimagining of knowledge, away from rigid structures, allows for a more expansive and liberating way of being.

Carol's rejection of the need to know and to be known also reveals a more profound desire to escape the labels that define her, particularly the label of 'mother,' which has confined her identity within societal expectations. This refusal to be known reflects a resistance to the pressure of conforming to traditional gender roles, which are often oppressive to those who do not fit neatly into these categories. However, Carol's resistance to the label of 'mother' also presents a conflict, as she is still responsible for George. This duality creates a nuanced portrayal, where the liberating aspects of 'not knowing' and breaking free from oppressive labels are contrasted with Carol's actions' emotional consequences on her daughter. The following excerpt illustrates Carol's subtle control over the narrative she presents to George in relation to the dynamic between mother and daughter.

information. He also noted that attention carries a cost, both in terms of the effort required to focus on the information and the resources needed to produce and transmit information. However, the first to coin the term 'attention economy' is Michael H. Goldhaber in Michael H. Goldhaber, 'The Attention Economy and the Net,' *First Monday*, 2.4 (1997), doi:[10.5210/fm.v2i4.519](https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v2i4.519). For more on this please see: Herbert A. Simon, Karl W. Deutsch, and Martin Shubik, 'Designing Organizations for an Information-Rich World,' *Computers, Communications, and the Public Interest*, 1971, pp. 37–72.

³⁹² Cixous, 'The Author in Truth,' p. 161.

³⁹³ Cixous, 'The Author in Truth,' p. 161.

More explicitly, it demonstrates the tension between her desire for freedom and her responsibilities as a mother:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>One day I was waiting at a cash machine in King’s Cross and there was this woman ahead of me, about the same age as me.</p> <p>As I am, George says.</p> <p>George, her mother says. Whose story is this?</p> <p>Sorry, George says.³⁹⁴</p>	<p>Un dia feia cua al caixer de King’s Cross i davant meu hi havia una dona si fa no fa de la meva edat.</p> <p>Com jo, diu la George.</p> <p>George, diu la seva mare. Qui l’explica, aquesta història?</p> <p>Ho sento, diu la George.³⁹⁵</p>

This passage highlights how Carol challenges George’s attempt to correct her language by asking, ‘Whose story is this?’ Through this question, Carol asserts ownership over the narrative, establishing her authority in the story she tells and, indirectly, how she is framed within the novel. This act of reclaiming control ties directly to Carol’s rejection of the label ‘mother.’ Refusing to be boxed into this traditional role, Carol simultaneously asserts her right to shape her identity and narrative on her own terms, free from the limiting expectations that come with that label. Throughout the novel, this form of maternal education is repeated, as Carol continually reminds George not to impose control over her, establishing boundaries that George repeatedly challenges. However, as Lea suggests, George’s fixation on grammar and attitude as a Latinist reflect her adolescent character.³⁹⁶ George’s need for order and

³⁹⁴ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 116.

³⁹⁵ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, pp. 96-7.

³⁹⁶ Lea, ‘Ali Smith,’ p. 64.

predictability, common in adolescence, drives her to try to shape the world, including her mother's narrative, into something she finds more agreeable.³⁹⁷ Lea's argument complicates the tension between Carol and George, indicating that George's controlling behaviour may stem more from youthful insecurity and a desire for structure than from any conscious attempt to undermine her mother. Ironically, as the protagonist of her section, George is the one who ultimately presents her mother's story to the reader through her memories, even as she tries to exert control over it. This dynamic subtly reinforces the theme of bothness, as George challenges and preserves her mother's narrative, allowing for a dual process of authority and influence. This interplay mirrors the tension between parental control and autonomy, as George's attempt to control her mother's language reflects a form of parental authority, which Carol ultimately resists by setting boundaries. Ultimately, this becomes a great example of the broader negotiation over language, narrative, and power between them.

However, there are significant adjustments in the translation due to linguistic differences. In the version in English, Carol explicitly claims ownership of the narrative she presents by using the word 'whose,' directly asserting her authority. In contrast, the Catalan text asks George who is telling the story, using the word 'qui,' (who) which shifts the focus from ownership to narration. This difference suggests that while the English text emphasises Carol's control over the narrative, it does not necessarily tie her identity to it. In the Catalan version, the informal language creates a more natural, conversational tone, shifting the emphasis from Carol's ownership of the story to the act of storytelling itself. By highlighting narration rather than ownership, the translation effectively engages with the novel's central theme: *how to be both*. By subtly suggesting that there are two narrators, Carol telling her story and George recounting Carol's story, the translation underscores the multiplicity of perspectives and layers within the novel. Carol's question, 'Qui l'explica, aquesta història?' emphasises the idea that a narrative can exist beyond a single narrator's lens yet is accessed by the reader through a singular voice. This duality aligns with the novel's broader exploration of bothness, suggesting that a story can contain multiple narrators, each contributing to different forms and interpretations. Additionally, the Catalan translation enhances the ontological complexity of the text, raising questions about the uncertainties of

³⁹⁷ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 64.

existence within the literary space and the nature of ownership itself. Unlike the version in English, which portrays Carol as an autonomous woman using capitalistic language to claim ownership of her story, the Catalan text reflects Carol's detachment from full narrative ownership, focusing instead on the significance of who tells the story. A crucial point for debate is whether storytelling inherently entails claiming ownership of a narrative. Storytelling appears to involve control over its framing, direction, and interpretation, suggesting ownership. In Carol's case, particularly in the English version, her question, 'Whose story is this?' explicitly asserts her narrative authority, reinforcing her control over how her experiences are conveyed. Nevertheless, the Catalan version complicates this. George's recollections and reinterpretations of her mother's life suggest that storytelling is not a singular act of possession but a dialogic process where stories evolve through interaction. The inherent exchange between narrators further challenges the notion of storytelling as ownership. In comparison, Carol may initially appear to be the authoritative voice, but George's role as a narrator filters and alters the story. Storytelling here becomes less about ownership in the traditional sense and more about how narratives are reshaped and passed on through different perspectives. Thus, in both the English and Catalan texts, storytelling emerges as a liminal space where stories are simultaneously possessed and shared, controlled yet open to reinterpretation. This reflects the novel's theme of bothness: an ongoing dialogue between self and other, authority and collaboration, ownership and shared narration.

Regarding Carol's maternal obligations and societal expectations, the novel provides insights into her limitations and struggles:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>[...] Well, I missed her. I still miss her. It felt like I had a friend. She was my friend. And God, George, something about it made me feel permitted.</p>	<p>[...] Bé, la trobava a faltar. Encara la trobo a faltar. Tenia la sensació que tenia una amiga. Ella era la meva amiga. I Déu meu, George, alguna cosa de tot això em feia sentir permesa.</p>

<p>Permitted? George says. That's insane.</p> <p>I know. Allowed, her mother says. Like I was being allowed. [...] Can you imagine?</p> <p>[...] No, George says.³⁹⁸</p>	<p>Permesa?, diu la George. Això és insà.</p> <p>Ja ho sé. Autoritzada. Com si fos autoritzada. [...]T'ho pots imaginar?</p> <p>[...] No, diu la George.³⁹⁹</p>
---	--

Here, Carol probes the boundaries of her obligations as a mother, exposing the struggle caused by the compressive nature of labelling. Carol articulates the complex emotions she experiences during her extramarital affair with someone she suspects is monitoring her due to her political activities. She describes the affair as making her feel 'permitted,' signalling the significance of her connection with the other woman, whom she regards as a friend, as a realm where she exists outside the constraints of social expectations. In this space, she is free from maternal and marital duties, a freedom that conflicts with her family life, since the affair is seen as a betrayal of her loyalty and honesty toward them. In the Catalan translation, a literal rendering of 'permitted' ('permesa') is used, emphasising the two languages' shared etymology. However, the use of cognates in translation can sometimes distort meaning, as demonstrated by the comparison between the English 'insane' and the Catalan 'insà.' The term 'insane' in English is often employed metaphorically to express surprise or disbelief, frequently as a casual dismissal of something extraordinary or shocking. In contrast, 'insà' in Catalan has a more clinical connotation, referring explicitly to mental illness. In this instance, the Catalan text unintentionally alters the tone, making George's rejection of her mother's actions more severe, since the translation suggests a more profound disapproval. This shift further distances George from the validity of Carol's experiences, deepening the emotional rift between them.

³⁹⁸ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 124.

³⁹⁹ Udina trans., *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 102.

The English and Catalan texts also incorporate ableist language, reflecting underlying power structures perpetuating societal marginalisation.⁴⁰⁰ Words like ‘insane’ and ‘insà’ invoke medicalised, diagnostic language that has historically been used to marginalise and stigmatise people with disabilities. The use of the cognate ‘insà’ suggests a deliberate strategy to reproduce the stilted effect of the source text. By retaining such terminology, the texts inadvertently normalise ableist language, reinforcing a system of alienation and oppression toward the disabled community. From a feminist translation perspective, translators face a dilemma of whether to retain ableist language from the source text or adapt it to avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes, particularly in cases such as this one, in which said vocabulary is not addressed or framed as such within the narrative itself. Alternative translations could have avoided ableist terms while still conveying the intended meaning, or the translator could have included a footnote to spark a discussion on the use of such language. In this case, the retention of ableist terms seems unnecessary, as it fails to transfer the cultural meaning and risks reinforcing harmful narratives. This highlights a tension at the core of this thesis’ argument: feminist translation, especially from an intersectional standpoint, is not uniquely focused on the practice of translating and its direct relation to gendered language, but it is about interrogating translation effects that sustain or disrupt intersecting structures of power, such as ableism. These effects on the text demonstrate how a translation can be participant in reproducing systems of marginalisation.

This concern with language constraining identity resonates with Carol’s experience. In the previous example, the paragraph describes the relationship of Carol and the woman with whom she was having an extramarital affair with, a relationship which disrupted the limiting categories ‘mother’ or ‘wife.’ This struggle against the gendered social labels is made explicit in her conversation with George:

⁴⁰⁰ The term ‘ableism’ refers to prejudice against or disregard for the interests of individuals with disabilities and is consistent with both ‘sexist’ and ‘racist’ principles (See: Eva Spišiaková, ‘Disability in Translation,’ in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Health*, ed. by Şebnem Susam-Saraeva and Eva Spišiaková (Routledge, 2021), pp. 300–313 (304, 306), doi:[10.4324/9781003167983](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003167983) ‘Ableism, n.,’ *Oxford English Dictionary* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/ableism_n> [accessed 2 February 2023]).

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>Can we never get to go beyond ourselves? Her mother says. Never get to be more than ourselves? Will I ever, as far as you're concerned, be allowed to be anything other than your mother?</p> <p>No, George says.</p> <p>And why is that? Her mother says.</p> <p>Because you're my mother, George says.⁴⁰¹</p>	<p>No podem aconseguir mai anar més enllà de nosaltres mateixos?, diu la seva mare. Mai no arribem a ser res més que nosaltres mateixos? Se'm permetrà mai, amb relació a tu, ser alguna cosa diferent de la teva mare?</p> <p>No, diu la George.</p> <p>I per què és així?, diu la seva mare.</p> <p>Perquè ets la meva mare, diu la George.⁴⁰²</p>

In the prior section, Carol examines the limitations imposed by the label 'mother,' focusing on how it restricts her interactions with George and affects other aspects of her life. There is a significant difference between the texts with the use of the generic masculine in 'nosaltres mateixos' when compared with the absence of grammatical gender in the text in English, which writes 'ourselves.' In English, 'ourselves' creates a reading that can be understood as including Carol and George; however, it also allows for a broader interpretation that expands Carol's reflection to society. This second reading is particularly relevant due to Carol's reflection relating to socially constructed labels such as 'mother,' gesturing toward the restrictions of the symbolic social order. If the first reading were prioritised, the translation would have operated through the feminine grammatical gender (*nosaltres mateixes*) to explicitly denominate Carol and George, potentially foregrounding a feminist reading

⁴⁰¹ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 124.

⁴⁰² Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 102.

concerned with the liberation of the feminine within a patriarchal society. Instead, the effect of the translation prioritises the broader reading, extending Carol's critique beyond the direct relation between her and George to the limiting power dynamics in society at large, which ultimately elevates the text to a commentary on the very structures of society while displacing the opportunity for a more explicitly feminist critique.

Further on, Carol asks: 'Will I ever, as far as you're concerned, be allowed to be anything other than your mother?'/ 'Se'm permetrà mai, amb relació a tu, ser alguna cosa diferent de la teva mare?' This highlights the pressure her role as a mother places on her, underscoring how deeply George's perception of her is tied to this identity. The English and Catalan versions present different emphases in their respective renditions. In Smith's text, the phrase 'as far as you're concerned' introduces a sense of worry or anxiety, suggesting Carol's concern about how George perceives her. This adds a relational and emotional dimension, implying that George's perception dictates the extent to which Carol can explore identities beyond motherhood. Meanwhile, Udina's version removes this subtext of anxiety, focusing solely on the relational aspect with 'relació,' which centres the conversation on the connection between them rather than the emotional weight of concern.

Carol's struggle to escape the confines of being 'just a mother' is made more difficult by George, whose perception enforces these boundaries. The phrase 'as far as you're concerned' reveals how George's viewpoint limits Carol's ability to explore her identity outside the maternal role. However, when Carol acts outside of these constraints, such as through her affair, the repercussions affect George directly, destabilising the family unit. This demonstrates the far-reaching implications of George's influence over Carol's identity, even as Carol attempts to define herself outside of it. The shift in language in the Catalan version, from 'concern' to 'relació,' alters the dynamic. George's agency is reduced, and her influence over Carol's identity is framed more in terms of their relationship than her personal worries or anxieties. While the English text emphasises George's perception and agency in shaping their relationship, the Catalan version decentralises this emphasis, subtly shifting focus away from George's power. This shift displaces George from the emotional core of the interaction, portraying her in a way that diminishes her interconnectedness with Carol. Exploring this further, it becomes evident that the absence of a direct Catalan equivalent for 'concern' leads the translator to make a choice that bridges the gap with a focus on relational dynamics. This choice impacts how George is portrayed, diminishing her role as an active

participant in shaping Carol's identity. Consequently, the Catalan text presents a less empowered George, whose role in the narrative is more peripheral compared to the English version's portrayal of her as a central figure influencing her mother's self-perception. This difference in translation mirrors earlier discussions about how shifts in language can alter character dynamics and narrative authority, such as the portrayal of Rodrigo and Macabéa's ontologies and agencies.

One significant correlation between Lispector's *A Hora da Estrela* and the power relationships examined in *How to Be Both* is how, in both books, death serves as an escape from cycles of projection and constrictive gender norms. As discussed, the dyad of Rodrigo and Macabéa in *A Hora da Estrela* is deconstructed by their deaths, which disrupts the projection of difference onto Macabéa and releases both characters from their defined roles. Similarly, in *How to Be Both*, the revelation that Carol has already passed away compels the reader to reflect on the restrictive gender norms she experienced in life, as portrayed through George's memories. The novel explores George's process of introjection as she copes with her mother's death, which ultimately leads to the release of the constraints that have defined Carol's identity within the family. This process is linguistically complex and ambiguous, marked by a re-signification of Carol's role in George's life. George must come to terms with her mother's defiance of the label 'mother,' allowing her to develop her own identity independently of Carol's maternal role. In life, George primarily knew Carol as her mother, a role shaped by societal expectations. After Carol's death, however, George undergoes a process of reconciling her mother's identity beyond the confines of motherhood. Through introjection, George begins to see 'Carol' as a multifaceted individual who exists both within and outside the boundaries of that label, suggesting that death offers a space for George to reimagine and redefine her understanding of her mother's identity. This negotiation of labels and identities leads the way to the third case study, *La Virgen Cabeza*, where a different system is rendered. There, gendered categories are mediated less through the familial roles and more through cultural references to femininity (Cleopatra's relation to the Virgin Mary, Susana Giménez, and Eva Perón). Unlike *How to Be Both*, where death offers the conditions for re-signification as George revisits her memories with Carol, in *La Virgen Cabeza* the negotiation of power is enacted through the living, offering more immediate spaces for the subaltern to contest and present meaning, like Cleopatra's chapters transcribed by Qüity.

Francescho: A Utilitarian Approach to Gender

The novel presents a complex exploration of gender identity and self-expression through various characters, with Francescho offering a particularly striking case. Francescho, born female but assuming a masculine identity to pursue a career as an artist, exemplifies a utilitarian approach to gender. This character challenges conventional gender binaries, raising questions about the relationship between gender identity and social roles, and the extent to which Francescho's identity fits within the woman-man binary. Following his mother's death, Francescho begins wearing her clothes, seemingly as a means of coping with grief and preserving her memory. This action recalls George's methods of dealing with loss in the novel, as explored in the previous section. However, Francescho's father struggles to reconcile his grief while Francescho is wearing his deceased partner's clothes, leading to a negotiation between father and child. This results in Francescho adopting a masculine identity, or in other words, socially transition, which grants him access to opportunities as a fresco painter, opportunities that would have been inaccessible to him as a working-class woman. This decision reflects a utilitarian use of gender, where Francescho's adoption of masculinity is driven by pragmatic concerns rather than a deeply felt internal identification with a particular gender. Unlike many characters who grapple with a strong sense of gender identity, Francescho's gender appears to be secondary to his desire to be recognised as an artist.

Francescho's identity is framed by three key aspects: his role as an artist, his need to be perceived as a man, and his biological femaleness. In this way, Francescho's gender is positioned as a social barrier to be negotiated rather than an intrinsic feature of selfhood. This absence of emotional attachment to a particular identity suggests that Francescho's primary concern is achieving equality in the artistic world rather than embodying a specific gender. This approach complicates traditional narratives of transness, which often involve a movement across the binary spectrum of man and woman, motivated by the person's experience or identification with transness, or, in some cases, a complete departure from the binary, ultimately portrayed as stories of identity exploration. Such forms of transness, grounded in self-identification and lived experience, constitute a legitimate and recognised mode of gendered subjectivity. Francescho's story, by contrast, positions gender as a tool; something to be employed strategically to navigate societal structures and thus presents it as

utilitarian in nature.⁴⁰³ This approach challenges essentialist views of gender, providing an alternative model where identity is fluid, shaped by external circumstances, and ultimately detached from any fixed sense of ‘self.’ This section will centre on Francescho’s narrative as a radical exploration of social transness, which subverts conventional representation by departing from trans as an identity category and instead presenting gender crossing as a strategic tool shaped by historical circumstances. Francescho does not embody transness in the sense of a fixed identity, but rather adopts a man role socially and professionally, in order to navigate the artistic world professionally. As introduced, the pivotal moment of Francescho’s adoption of a masculine performance is initiated by his father in the following way:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
But you’ll have to wear your brother’s clothes, he said. And you might, if I find you a training, best be, or become, one of them. Your brothers. ⁴⁰⁴	Però hauràs de posar-te les robes dels teus germans, va dir. I podries, si trobo algú que t’instrueixi, ser, o esdevenir, un d’ells. Els teus germans. ⁴⁰⁵

The assumption underlying this exchange is that Francescho has the potential to become one of his brothers if he is consciously introduced and socialised as a man, symbolised by wearing his brother’s clothes. In Smith’s text, the phrase ‘your brothers’ is added after ‘them’ to clarify the ambiguity of the pronoun ‘them.’ This ambiguity reflects Francescho’s fluid

⁴⁰³ In here, “Utilitarianism” is used as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary: “the system of thought that states that the best action or decision in a particular situation is the one that brings most advantages to the most people” (‘Utilitarianism,’ *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus*, 2024 <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/utilitarianism>> [accessed 6 January 2023]).

⁴⁰⁴ Smith, *How to be both*, pp. 217.

⁴⁰⁵ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, pp. 170.

identity, which is set on a trajectory toward a specific ‘other,’ namely his brothers. The phrase captures how Francescho’s transition is seen not as fluid but as a movement toward a predefined category (manhood) by adopting the identity of his brothers. Moreover, the awkward phrasing in English underscores the tension between Francescho’s reality and society’s rigid gender classification system. In contrast, the Catalan translation uses the masculine plural pronoun ‘ells,’ (‘them,’ masc. pl.). This choice automatically places Francescho within a binary construct, where the addition of ‘els teus germans’ (‘your brothers’) becomes redundant. The use of ‘ells’ directly aligns Francescho with the masculine gender, suggesting that his trajectory is not fluid but fixed within a binary framework. As a result, the translation reinforces the idea that Francescho is transitioning to become a trans man rather than embracing a more fluid or non-binary identity.

A potential alternative in the Catalan translation could have been using the neutral pronoun ‘ho,’ which might have conveyed Francescho’s duality and fluidity more effectively, similar to its use in the novel’s title. ‘Ho’ could replace the attribute complement (‘ser-ho’ or ‘esdevenir-ho’), introducing a layer of ambiguity that aligns more closely with Francescho’s portrayal in Smith’s text. This would have preserved the character’s ambiguous relationship with gender, suggesting a more nuanced identity transcending binary classifications while accommodating social expectations. In other words, Francescho would first exist outside the binary spectrum (‘become, one of them’/‘esdevenir-ho’) and, second, be socially recognised as a man (‘brothers’/‘germans’). By not adopting such an alternative, the Catalan text emphasises masculinity from the outset, confining Francescho to a more rigid construct of gender. This limits the character’s potential to transcend traditional gender norms and diminishes the fluidity conveyed in Smith’s narrative. The translation reflects societal constraints on gender identity, where language plays a significant role in shaping and restricting how characters like Francescho are perceived. In a language like Catalan, where grammatical gender is more rigidly enforced, the character undergoes a linguistic transformation that offers new opportunities for exploring gender tensions. However, this same linguistic structure also imposes additional constraints, encapsulating Francescho further within predefined gender roles. Hence, Francescho’s identity becomes a site of negotiation not only within the social and cultural sphere but also within the linguistic boundaries of the translation.

In this scene, Francesco assumes a performative role as a man not out of identification but out of practicality, since it was the social expectation that only men could pursue a career as a painter and as a means to accommodate his father's mourning. However, this interpretation may be considered contentious, as existing scholarship often refers to Francesco's gender identity as a woman. For example, Lea refers to George and Francesco as 'women with male names' and consistently uses the pronoun 'she' when discussing Francesco.⁴⁰⁶ Readers may presume that Francesco is primarily a man because of his socialisation and adoption of a masculine role or that he is a woman based on biological sex despite not having been socialised as a woman and not expressing any identification explicitly with the label. Francesco does not lean toward any particular gender identity in the sense of 'identification,' leaving room for interpretations that encompass all of these possibilities, or none of them, acknowledging his fluidity and ambivalence. Instead, he places his identity on the label of 'artist,' which becomes a synonym for 'man' given the historical context and social sphere. Ultimately, it could be argued that Francesco evades the conventional gender identity construct, employing it pragmatically, with no apparent personal inclination to self-identify as either a man or a woman. As such, to reflect the character's ambiguity and fluidity, Francesco will be referred to using the pronouns he/him, as these have been the pronouns used to refer to him in the novel and the ones he uses consistently throughout the novel. However, a reader may opt for other pronouns, such as they/them or she/her, due to Francesco's ambiguous identity, which appears to have a 'plastic' nature, stemming from his disinterest in self-formalising his identity, aligning with the novel's theme of 'bothness.' It is important to note that this choice of pronouns is made considering that when Francesco presents as masculine and performs as an artist, he decides to adopt the pronouns associated with that role, he/him. This reading will offer an empathetic interpretation of Francesco as a socially trans man.

One way in which Francesco's identity is revealed in the novel is through his role as an artist. Francesco is socially identified as a man, and this identity is deeply intertwined with and dependent upon his role as a painter, to the extent that both labels, man and artist, become inseparable. For instance, in the following scene, the sex worker in the House of

⁴⁰⁶ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 64.

Pleasures recognises ‘him’ not as a man but rather as an artist, illustrating how Francescho’s identity is perceived and shaped by his profession:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>[...] I opened my satchel, unrolled the paper, got out my board.</p> <p>Ah, she said. That’s what you are. I should have guessed.⁴⁰⁷</p>	<p>[...] vaig obrir la meva bossa, vaig desenrotllar el paper i vaig treure’n la post de dibuixar.</p> <p>Ah, va dir. Això és el que ets. Hauria d’haver-ho endevinat.⁴⁰⁸</p>

This interconnectedness between Francescho’s gender and artistic identity suggests that his occupation heavily mediates the societal perception of his gender. In the novel’s historical setting, a painter’s identity is socially restricted primarily to men, influencing how Francescho is perceived and gendered by others, complicating any simplistic binary view of gender. In this scene, Francescho visits a brothel not for sexual gratification but to use the women there as models. In the abstract, the woman says she ‘should have guessed,’ and the verb is translated as ‘endevinat’ in Catalan. The verb ‘endevinar’ (‘to guess’) implies something enigmatic, not immediately discernible by sight, often linked to riddles (‘endevinalles’). This word choice introduces a playful, mysterious quality to Francescho’s identity, with the woman acting as the medium through which the puzzle is revealed. In contrast, the English text’s use of ‘guess’ implies a presumption or assumption that Francescho’s identity can be discerned simply by observation, suggesting an overreach of entitlement. By comparing these two texts, each language’s different tones become evident. The Catalan version presents identity as a perplexing riddle, playful and concealed, while

⁴⁰⁷ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 265.

⁴⁰⁸ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 205.

the English text suggests the notion of presuming one's identity based on surface-level observation. The playfulness introduced in the Catalan version aligns with the novel's broader use of humour, which Smith frequently incorporates into exploring identity. This is exemplified further in a subsequent scene, where Francescho confronts Falco de Prisciano, the man who hired him to paint the mural, asserting that his lack of a phallus does not make him 'a little less' of an artist:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>[...] said you make a very handsome girl, sir).</p> <p>So you're a little less, Francescho, than I believed, the Falcon said now.</p> <p>A very little thing less only, Mr de Prisciano, I said, and not less at all when it comes to picturemaking.</p> <p>No, you're talented, true, all the same, he said.</p> <p>Exactly the same, I said. No less.⁴⁰⁹</p>	<p>[...] em va dir queda molt atractiu com a noia, senyor).</p> <p>O sigui que ets una mica menys, Francescho, del que pensava, va dir ara el Falco.</p> <p>Una miqueta menys només, senyor de Prisciano, i no gens menys pel que fa a la pintura.</p> <p>No, tens talent, es veritat, això és igual, va dir.</p> <p>Exactament, igual, vaig dir. No menys.⁴¹⁰</p>

This passage uses humour and wit to subvert the Freudian framework of identity, particularly the symbolism of the phallus. By suggesting that Francescho is 'a little less' due to lacking

⁴⁰⁹ Smith, *How to be both*, pp. 299-300.

⁴¹⁰ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 231.

a phallus, yet ‘exactly the same’ when it comes to painting, the text critiques the conventional association of identity and value with gendered anatomy. Francescho’s identity, rather than being diminished by the absence of a phallus, is elevated through his artistic skill. Here, the brush becomes a symbolic phallus, transcending Freudian fears of castration and reinforcing Francescho’s authority as an artist. In this sense, Francescho’s gender identity is less about physicality and more about the capacity to wield power in a patriarchal society, symbolised by his mastery of painting. However, a closer look at the translation reveals relevant nuances.

In Smith’s text, Francescho is described as a ‘very handsome girl,’ with the adjective ‘handsome’ introducing an androgynous or ambiguous quality. ‘Handsome’ is traditionally associated with masculinity, but here it is used to describe Francescho in a way that challenges conventional gender norms, blending masculine traits with the feminine identity of a ‘girl.’ The use of the verb ‘to make’ further echoes the performative nature of Francescho’s transformation, signalling that gender, in his case, is a construct that he actively participates in shaping. This phrasing emphasises Francescho’s agency in constructing his identity, aligning the wording with Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity.⁴¹¹ Gender, understood here as socially constructed effect reinforced through repeated acts and social meaning rather than a stable identity.⁴¹² In other words, this segment reflects an active negotiation between societal perceptions and personal choice, suggesting that Francescho plays a role in defining how others perceive him. By contrast, Udina’s Catalan translation uses the verb ‘queda’ (‘remains’ or ‘is left’), emphasising creating an impression rather than actively shaping one’s identity or social perception. This subtle shift in wording moves the focus from Francescho’s agency to the external, performative aspect of gender, suggesting that gender identity is something inferred or imposed from outside based on appearance, in other words, a passive effect. The translation of ‘handsome’ as ‘atractiu’ (attractive) further transforms the meaning. In Catalan, the adjective ‘atractiu’ (masc.) contrasts with ‘noia’ (girl), creating a different dynamic. The sentence now implies that Francescho, a man, would make an attractive girl. This shifts the focus from the subversive tension in the source text,

⁴¹¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 2011), doi:[10.4324/9780203824979](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824979).

⁴¹² Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. xv.

where ‘handsome’ directly modulates ‘girl,’ challenging gender norms, to one that aligns more with traditional beauty standards.

Furthermore, the syntactic structure in the Catalan translation, ‘atractiu com a noia’ (‘attractive as a girl’), introduces a more mediated, complex syntax. This structure distances the subversion that is immediate in Smith’s phrasing, ‘handsome girl.’ The direct juxtaposition of ‘handsome’ and ‘girl’ in English creates an immediate tension between masculinity and femininity. This tension is not as present in the Catalan version due to the more detached phrasing. The Catalan translation, therefore, partly reaffirms hegemonic gender norms by shifting the focus toward Francescho’s external presentation and appearance rather than maintaining the emphasis on his agency and the fluidity of his gender identity, as seen in the English text. However, this adaptation in the Catalan version is not without merit. The masculine adjective ‘handsome’ has no direct equivalent in Catalan that would preserve the same subversive effect while still referring to Francescho as a girl. A literal translation, such as using the word ‘guapa’ (handsome, fem.), would reinforce femininity due to the grammatical gender in Catalan, losing the androgynous or ambiguous quality central to Smith’s text. By choosing ‘atractiu’ (masc.) and adopting a more complex syntactic structure, Udina effectively maintains a degree of subversion through a nuanced approach. While the immediacy of the subversion is diminished, this choice preserves Francescho’s gender complexity in a way that avoids reinforcing purely feminine traits. Ultimately, the translation reveals the challenges of balancing fluidity and binary gender norms across languages. The English version foregrounds Francescho’s agency in navigating gender identity, while the Catalan text, constrained by grammatical gender, takes a more external, performative approach. Nevertheless, Udina’s choice reflects a thoughtful consideration of linguistic limitations, ensuring that Francescho’s gender complexity is still present, even if expressed through a more intricate, less immediate structure. The interpretative aspects of translation then become evident, as these texts shape the politics of gender representation. Francescho’s case shows how subtle linguistic effects can amplify or diminish agency, alter gender performativity, and shift the subversive potential of a text. The opportunities brought by translation as an intervention in the representation of identity, particularly for figures inhabiting marginalised positions, demonstrate that translation strategies inevitably negotiate social norms, in this case remaining close yet reducing agency over gender.

Similarly to how Francescho challenges gender norms and embodies a slippage across the gender binary (as seen in how he ‘makes a very handsome girl’), a comparable linguistic slippage occurs in George’s section. In this example, George tries to find Francescho’s paintings and approaches the women at the information desk. Here, the reader encounters a linguistic slippage between masculine and feminine in reference to Francescho, even across centuries, as the women mistakenly believe George is asking for ‘Della Francesca’:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>Francescho de what? The woman behind the information desk had said.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Cossa, and it’s del, George said. With an I.</p> <p>Della Francesca, the other woman, coming over, said.⁴¹³</p>	<p>Francescho de què?, havia dit la dona darrere el taulell d’informació.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Cossa, i és del, va dir la George. Amb I.</p> <p>Della Francesca, va dir l’altra dona, acostant-se.⁴¹⁴</p>

This example highlights a unique opportunity often overlooked in comparative literature: the ability for translation to elevate and sometimes even enhance what is being done in the source text. In the English version, the confusion between *del* and *della* is phonetic, with the sound of the letter ‘L’ (/l̩/) superimposed on the sound of ‘del’ (/d̩l̩/). The awkward addition of ‘a’ in ‘Della’ creates a deviation that might seem slightly forced. In contrast, the Catalan language presents a more organic opportunity for this slippage, as the sound of ‘L’ in Catalan (/l̩ə/) aligns more closely with the sound of ‘della’ (/d̩l̩ə/). This subtle

⁴¹³ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 151.

⁴¹⁴ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, pp. 120-1.

difference in phonetics allows the confusion between *del* and *della* to appear more natural in Catalan, creating a smoother, more cohesive misunderstanding.

This slippage, both in language and gender, mirrors Francescho's identity, revealing how he can exist simultaneously as both a man and a woman or, arguably, as neither. This fluidity resonates with Giorgio Agamben's concept of 'potentiality,' which is defined as the capacity to both be and not be neither fully affirming nor denying one's participation in any given role.⁴¹⁵ In this context, Francescho embodies this potential, as he exists in a space where his gender identity is both present and absent, fluid and fixed. The narrative presents Francescho as an 'artist' first, a role traditionally associated with masculinity in the socio-historical context, and as a 'man' only by necessity because the label 'artist' required it. Although Francescho performs masculinity (by dressing in masculine clothing, changing his voice, and adopting masculine mannerisms), he does not explicitly express a desire to align with the binary construct of gender from an essentialist and monolithic perspective. He neither wholly identifies as a man (not in the sense presented in more traditional narratives surrounding transmen) nor as a woman, leaving room for an interpretation of his gender as fluid, unanchored, or, most interestingly, irrelevant. In this way, Francescho's gender identity can be read as a kind of *potentiality*, where he holds the capacity to be both a man and a woman, but also neither, simultaneously embracing ambiguity and fluidity.

Here, potentiality is understood as connected to contingency, opening the possibility for it to exist without being tethered to a predetermined reason or subordinated under 'Being.'⁴¹⁶ Francescho's gender potential can be seen as liberated from reason, allowing his identity to transcend socially imposed binary structures and, to an extent, detached from dominant discourses that inform and shape his context. This freedom enables Francescho to exist outside the constraints of the gender binary, expressing his being in a way that subverts societal expectations while never challenging the construct. The novel does not aim to destroy the binary system but rather to subvert it, showing how Francescho's gender identity

⁴¹⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. by Daniel Heller-Roazen, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford University Press, 1999). p. 266.

⁴¹⁶ Agamben, *Potentialities*, p. 258.

can coexist with, yet remain separate from, the binary framework. However, Francesco's experience also reflects a tension between subversion and conformity. While Francesco defies conventional (essentialist) gender norms, his identity remains, in some ways, subordinate to the binary construct, since he adopts masculine behaviours to succeed in his career as an artist, a position only available to men in his time. This interplay between fluidity and conformity raises the question of whether Francesco's gender potential truly escapes the binary or remains entangled within it.

The character's potentiality to be both man and woman, or neither, does not depend on the constraints of a defined 'Being,' but rather on a fluid existence that embraces multiplicity. Francesco's identity, in this sense, can be seen as a plastic hologram with no fixed shape, capable of shifting between identities depending on circumstance and social context. This plasticity reflects the novel's exploration of 'bothness:' a state where one can exist as both man and woman or both, gendered and agendered. Ultimately, this exploration of potentiality leaves Francesco's gender identity an open mystery, inviting the reader to engage with the fluidity and ambiguity of the character. As Francesco's story unfolds, his gender potential remains a central aspect of his identity, something that is not merely subordinated to the binary but potentially exists beyond it. Agamben's argument that potentiality supplants Being rather than merely emancipating itself from it resonates here. In Francesco's case, his 'Being' is supplanted by the potentiality to *be*: to exist beyond the confines of any fixed gender identity, allowing for a more fluid and liberated understanding of the self.⁴¹⁷

Sexuality and Gender: Francesco and Barto

Francesco's narrative explores the intersectionality of gender and sexuality in a nuanced and comprehensive manner, offering readers two significant moments that critically engage with the limitations of heterosexual patriarchy and its potential subversion through

⁴¹⁷ Agamben, *Potentialities*, p. 258.

semiotic play. These instances reveal the intricate connections between gender and sexuality, illustrating how they operate within societal, cultural, and political contexts, particularly concerning power dynamics, expectations, and entitlement. Francescho's narrative thus provides a valuable contribution to scholarly discussions on intersecting identities and the dynamics of power and oppression. One of the most compelling moments is Barto's reaction upon discovering Francescho's biological sex:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
Is it true? he said. You've been false? All these years?	És veritat?, va dir. Era tot mentida? Tots aquests anys?
I have never not been true, I said.	No t'he dit mai cap mentida, vaig dir.
[...]	[...]
You are other than I thought, he said. ⁴¹⁸	Ets diferent del que em pensava, va dir. ⁴¹⁹

In this exchange, Barto confronts Francescho after discovering his biological sex, and the dialogue highlights several significant elements concerning gender, sexuality, and language. To begin with, a key difference exists between 'You've been false?' in the text in English and 'Era tot mentida?' (Was everything a lie?) in the Catalan translation. In Smith's version, Francescho's gender performance is linked to the verb 'to be,' suggesting that Barto equates it with falseness or being *unreal*. This phrasing invalidates Francescho's existence, reducing his identity to a deception. In contrast, Udina's translation shifts the emphasis away from Francescho's identity and toward the relational context, with Barto questioning whether their entire relationship was a lie. This distinction subtly alters the emotional and thematic

⁴¹⁸ Smith, *How to be both*, pp. 278-9.

⁴¹⁹ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 215-6.

implications of the confrontation. Francescho's response also demonstrates a crucial difference: in English, he says, 'I have never not been true,' while in Catalan, he states, 'No t'he dit mai cap mentida' (I have never told you a lie). The English phrase, by using the word 'true,' suggests that Francescho's identity and experience have always been authentic, despite Barto's accusations of falseness. This phrasing highlights the concept of truthfulness in relation to personal identity, affirming Francescho's sincerity. In contrast, the Catalan focuses on falsehood with the repetition of 'lie,' placing the dialogue's emphasis on the perceived honesty or dishonesty in their relationship rather than questioning the existential authenticity of Francescho himself. This introduces a subtle contradiction: the Catalan reformulation transforms the claim into a relational assertion dependent on the listener's reception. In other words, truth here becomes a matter of fidelity between speaker and listener. This shifts the claim from an ontological statement of identity in English to an intersubjective statement of trust and interpretation in Catalan.

On a stylistic level, Smith's text juxtaposes the words 'false' and 'true,' creating a binary opposition that mirrors the tension between gender performance and authenticity. This duality amplifies the personal conflict, as Francescho's gender identity is directly challenged. The Catalan version, however, uses 'lie' as a recurring motif, which ties the conversation to broader themes of the novel, particularly those explored in George's section, where issues of truth, deception, and perception take centre stage. Ultimately, the differences in these translations reveal the ways in which language shapes how gender and sexuality are interrogated. The version in English positions Francescho's identity as something under scrutiny for its 'truthfulness,' while the Catalan situates the conflict within the boundaries of relational dynamics and communication, subtly reinforcing the thematic exploration of honesty and identity. The implications of these different linguistic portrayals of Francescho's identity concerning falsehood and reality are highly complex and delicate. Barto's sense of betrayal, sparked by Francescho's nonconforming identity, underscores the fragility of the binary system. Francescho's social gender, biological sex, and sexuality do not align with cis heteronormativity, resulting in a radical expression and experience of gender. The notion of falsehood, as invoked by Barto, fails to encapsulate the complexity of the non-binary experience and falls short of recognising the legitimacy of Francescho's identity. Furthermore, Smith's portrayal of this dialogue centres on Francescho articulating his identity in terms of negation, denying what he is not or has not done. This narrative technique of identity about negativity is connected to Julia Kristeva's work on the subject-in-process,

where identity is constantly shifting and defined through what it negates and through the interplay of the Symbolic and the Semiotic.⁴²⁰ Francescho's rejection of Barto's accusation of falsehood aligns with Kristeva's idea that identity is not fixed but is always in the process of becoming, often in contrast to societal expectations. The scene also brings Barto's sexual orientation into question, illustrating how sexual identity labels are often tied to gender binaries. Specifically, binary heterosexuality (and its 'opposing' form, homosexuality) is predicated on attraction to the 'opposite' or same-gender identity, reinforcing rigid distinctions within a binary system. When attraction involves a person who defies essentialist binary approaches, it challenges these labels due to their assumed essentialisation, forcing individuals like Barto to re-examine their sexual identity. This moment reveals the inherent flaws in language and labels that seek to enforce binary structures while highlighting the limits of current frameworks to encompass identities like Francescho's, which resist such categorisations.

Patriarchal structures are the ones that charge and structuralise the interactions here depicted between Francescho and Barto. It is Barto's realisation of Francescho's female biological sex that drives his sense of entitlement, implying that penetrative sex between a phallus and vagina is somehow 'inevitable.' This sense of inevitability is deeply rooted in patriarchal assumptions about gender and sex, where heterosexual penetration is framed as the ultimate consummation of sexual desire, reflecting how the heterosexual matrix operates:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
[...] that he loved me, and that our friendship had been tenable on condition that he could never have me , that I was never to be had , and that someone else,	[...] que m'estimava, i que la nostra amistat havia estat sostenible amb la condició que no em podria tenir mai , que mai no seria possible tenir-me , i que algú altre,

⁴²⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (Columbia University Press, 1984), with a special interest in 'The Semiotic and the Symbolic', pp. 19-106.

<p>anyone else, saying out loud to them what I was, other than a painter, broke this condition, since those words in themselves mean the inevitability, the being had.⁴²¹</p>	<p>qualsevol altre, dient-li en veu alta el que jo era, a part de pintor, trencava aquesta condició, perquè aquestes paraules en si mateixes signifiquen que era inevitable, que podia tenir-me.⁴²²</p>
--	--

The relationship between Francescho and Barto is established initially as homo-platonic, built on the unspoken precondition tied to Barto's heterosexuality: 'he could never have me, that I was never to be had' / 'no em podria tenir mai, que mai no seria possible tenir-me.' This dynamic resonates with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's conceptualisation of the homosocial, wherein same-sex relationships are structured by desire and power, but positioned outside of explicit desire, a notion Sedgwick challenges by presenting a continuum connecting the homosocial and the homosexual.⁴²³ One of the harmful consequences of heteronormativity is the presumption of inevitability: the assumption that male men and female women are naturally and inevitably sexually attracted to each other, with the patriarchal assumption that in said relation, the man is the subject, and the woman is the object. This assumption not only sidelines other sexualities and imposes oppressive power dynamics but also excludes alternative gender identities that fall outside, or which cross the binary spectrum. Such deviations are seen as suspicious or, as demonstrated by Barto, as forms of betrayal against the norms set by the cis-heteropatriarchy.

This dynamic is highlighted in Barto's line, 'You are other than I thought' / 'Ets diferent del que em pensava.' Barto's projection of gendered assumptions onto Francescho is a way to engage in a process of self-recognition. When Francescho resists being confined to these projections, existing as an independent self, it undermines Barto's sense of identity and disrupts their relationship. Francescho makes it clear that the fault lies in the projection

⁴²¹ Smith, *How to be both*, pp. 278-9.

⁴²² Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 215-6.

⁴²³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Gender and Culture (Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 1-2.

system itself, where assumptions about gender and sex are baseless. As a result, Barto's 'inevitable' romantic and sexual feelings surface, leading to a re-negotiation of their friendship. As has been established, Francescho's gender identity is often subordinated to his career as a painter, with patriarchal society dictating the performative aspects of both his identity as an artist and as a man. Here, the separation of those two identities ('other than a painter') becomes a moment of disruption, threatening the stability of their friendship for the first time. Moreover, this moment reveals the lack of agency given to women within the patriarchal framework, where the assumption is that a woman cannot refuse 'being had.' This applies both sexually and ontologically. In the Catalan text, the reflexive pronoun in 'tenir-me' ('having me') makes the objectification of the speaker explicit to the reader, reinforcing the idea that the person being 'had' is Francescho. The English text, however, renders this objectification invisible with the phrase 'the being had,' internalising and obscuring the woman's lack of agency, a subtle reinforcement of the objectification of women while displacing the emphasis on the implication being assumed in Francescho. These translation effects analysed in this section point out to linguistic and cultural closeness between the source and target text, where meaning is transferred through a minimal 'gap.' However, even in these cases, subtle negotiations take place, as for example the Catalan text enhances the feminist critique embedded in the source text by making the objectification more explicit. This adds a layer of critical visibility that reinforces the interrogation of gendered and sexual expectations. In other words, it demonstrates how translation can amplify political meaning in literary translation.

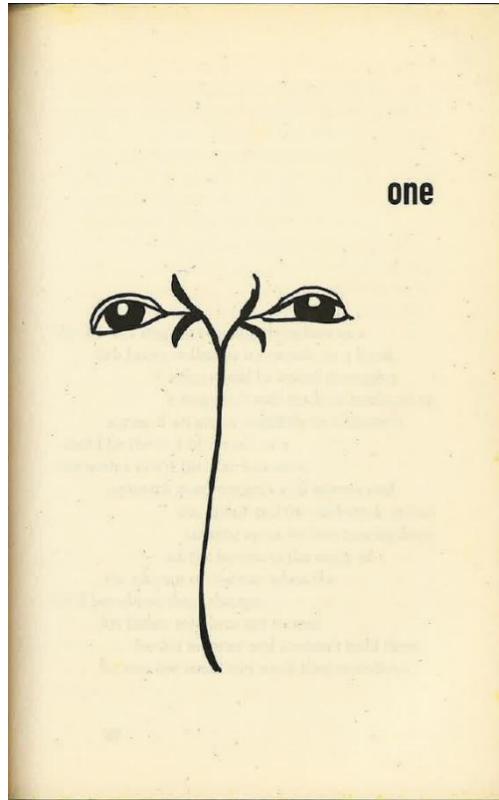
Francescho and George: Looking and Being Looked At

The novel's central theme of 'bothness' is explored through various dynamics, including cross-temporal narrations, fluid identities, and, most relevant to this section, the different modes of perception. To further elaborate, the narrative also explores the theme of 'bothness' through the recurring sub-theme of seeing and being seen and its motif of the 'eyes,' which plays a crucial role in *How to Be Both*. This concept ties into Laura Mulvey's analysis of visual pleasure and the 'male gaze' within the patriarchal psychoanalytical framework, and more specifically, her exploration of scopophilia, or the pleasure derived from looking, which identifies two primary structures: the objectification of another person,

particularly women, which is driven by sexual impulses, and the narcissistic identification with what is seen, motivated by ego libido.⁴²⁴

The motif of seeing and being seen is introduced at the beginning of Francescho's and George's narratives, each marked by a visual symbol related to the act of looking. Francescho's section opens with an image of two eyes depicted as leaves in a style akin to surrealism or symbolism when isolated from its source content. This detail is taken from the actual Francesco del Cossa's portrait of Santa Lucia, patron saint of the blind and those with eye diseases, part of the Griffoni polyptych dating from 1473-1474:

⁴²⁴ Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' *Screen*, 16.3 (1975), pp. 6–18 (8, 10), doi:[10.1093/screen/16.3.6](https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6).



*Figure 5. Scan from the illustration at the beginning of Francescho's section depicts two eyes as a sprig, taken from a fresco painting. Scan from Smith, *How to Be Both*, p.*

187.



Figure 6 Francesco del Cossa, Santa Lucia, c.1473/1474. Tempera on poplar panel. A pale woman holding a palm frond in one hand and a disembodied pair of eyes branching from a stem in the other hand against a gold background.

The surrealist quality of the eyes-as-leaves also mirrors the creative act of painting, emphasising Francescho's role as an artist who sees with a heightened, metaphorical vision. Within the narrative and in reference to the actual work from the artist, this symbol belongs to the artist's portrayal of St Lucia. St Lucia, the patron saint of sight, is often depicted holding her own eyes on a platter or in her hand, a paradoxical image of blindness and vision. Within the novel, Francescho's passage offers an ekphrastic description of Francescho's painting of St Lucia, revealing not only the artist's symbolic choices but also his philosophical reflections on sight and vision:

[...] she had eyes on a sprig in her hand, eyes opening at the end of the sprig like flowers will, cause the great Alberti writes that the eye is like a bud, which made me think of eyes opening like plantwork, cause St Lucia is the saint of eyes and light and is usually seen blind

or eyeless and many painters give her eyes but not in her face, instead they put them on a platter or set them in the palm of her hand⁴²⁵

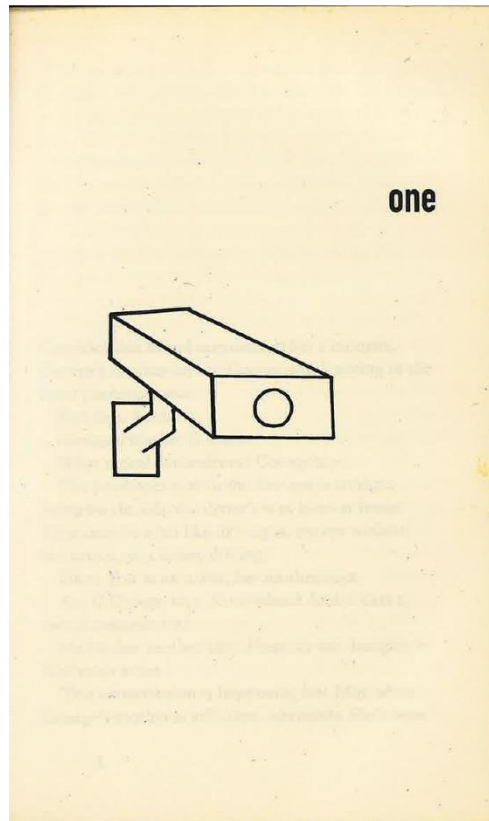
In this passage, Francescho reflects on the artistic representations of St Lucia, noting how men painters often depict the saint as blind, with her eyes displaced onto a platter or held in her hand as a symbolic gesture. This portrayal is partly exploitative in its use of body dismemberment to emphasise the symbolism of the figure, where her physical blindness emphasises her role as a passive object of religious and artistic contemplation. As noted by Mulvey, women are often positioned as passive objects within visual culture, existing primarily for the pleasure and control of the ‘male observer,’ which aligns with the tradition here described by Francescho.⁴²⁶ Francescho, however, chooses a different approach that retains St Lucia’s eyes while still engaging with the symbolic dimensions of her representation. By doing so, Francescho challenges the patriarchal tradition of stripping women of their agency, opting instead to maintain the saint’s eyes intact while still acknowledging her symbolic importance through the sprig. In keeping her eyes, Francescho resists the traditional objectification and offers a feminist revision of the figure that acknowledges her symbolic significance but refuses to diminish her physical integrity in favour of a purely aesthetic or religious metaphor.

In contrast, George’s section begins with the image of a surveillance camera, signifying modern vigilance and, in a sense, presenting modern surveillance on par with the religious surveillance implied in the figure of St Lucia. These contrasting symbols of observation, one natural and abstract, the other mechanical and contemporary, immediately signal the novel’s focus on different modes of the gaze that transcend time, positioning both the reader and author as active observers in the narrative and potentially implying their role as those higher figures charged with the role of observing the narratives. Francescho, met through the artistic legacy that transcends centuries, and George, observed through the

⁴²⁵ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 346

⁴²⁶ Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,’ p. 11.

modern surveillance lens, foreground the act of observation itself, inviting readers to consider the gaze's power across different historical contexts.



*Figure 7. Drawing by Sarah Wood, printed in Ali Smith, *Hot to Be Both*, p. 1. A drawing of a surveillance camera.*

Aside from the more overt dynamic of the reader perceiving and looking at the protagonists of each narrative section, the protagonists engage with various aspects of looking, being looked at, and, importantly, representation. Representation plays a critical role in shaping the way we understand and interpret what is seen, and in the novel, it becomes a site of both suffering and resistance. Scholars such as Lea have observed that *How to Be Both* engages with the visual through the subtheme of ‘artfulness,’ with Francescho’s talent as a painter subordinated to the vein whims of his patrons. In contrast, George engages with art in a more contemporary setting, viewing the frescoes but also repeatedly watching the same abusive

pornographic film.⁴²⁷ The juxtaposition of these scenes explores the tension between artistic creation and exploitation, as well as the impact of the market on art and representation. In both instances, art becomes a lens through which suffering is masked. Francescho's work, dictated by powerful patrons, reflects how art can be co-opted by authority and stripped of its artistic relevance in favour of its political and economic significance. Similarly, George's father's dismissive comment about the girl in the pornographic video, 'She was probably very well paid for it,' highlights how the commodification of women's bodies in media obscures their suffering.⁴²⁸ The idea of 'payment' or compensation glosses over the exploitation, just as George hangs posters over the growing hole in her ceiling, covering the damage without addressing the root problem.⁴²⁹ The cracks in the ceiling mirror the cracks in the way representation is often used to mask exploitation, particularly of women.

However, the novel also offers examples of positive, empowering representation. Francescho's portraits inspire the women at the brothel to challenge the social order and pursue better lives, using the power of art to break away from long-standing traditions. This moment serves as a counterpoint to the exploitative representation seen elsewhere in the novel, demonstrating that art can also be a tool for self-discovery and resistance:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>You little idiot, she said. Have you no idea? They look at your pictures. They get airs and graces. They come to my rooms and they ask me for more of a cut. Or they look at your pictures. They get all prowessy. They decide to choose a different life. And</p>	<p>Mira que ets beneit, em va dir. No ho entens? Miren els teus retrats. Es veuen preciosos. Em vénen a veure i em demanen cobrar més. O miren els teus retrats. Es posen gallets. Decideixen triar una vida diferent. I totes les que han marxat ho han</p>

⁴²⁷ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 68.

⁴²⁸ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 224.

⁴²⁹ Lea, 'Ali Smith,' p. 68.

<p>all the ones who've gone have left by the front door, unprecedented in this house which has never seen girls go by anything but the back. ⁴³⁰</p>	<p>fet per la porta del davant, una cosa sense precedents en aquesta casa, que no havia vist sortir noies més que per darrere.⁴³¹</p>
---	--

This passage in the novel highlights how Francescho's work as a painter disrupts traditional power dynamics and offers the women in the brothel a path to empowerment, challenging the dynamics of the gaze as theorised by Mulvey. In Mulvey's framework, women in visual media are often subjected to the 'male gaze,' in which they are reduced to passive objects of sexual desire, fragmented and consumed by the viewer's scopophilic instinct (the pleasure derived from looking).⁴³² This dynamic places the viewer in control while the woman is turned into a spectacle. However, Francescho's approach fundamentally shifts this pattern by engaging not with the scopophilic pleasure of the viewer but with the ego libido (the process of identification).⁴³³ Instead of objectifying the women, Francescho offers them a representation in which they can identify with their own image, engaging in a process of subjectification. In this way, Francescho's work redefines the role of the viewer. Rather than inviting the gaze to consume these women as passive objects, the pictures offer a more egalitarian, even participatory, mode of seeing. Mulvey's distinction between the active male gaze and the passive female subject is subverted. Francescho, as both an artist and a socially trans man, embodies a non-traditional gaze; one that sees women not as objects of desire but as complete, subjectified individuals, despite of his bisexuality evidenced by his sexual encounters with both men and women throughout the novel.

This gaze resists the voyeuristic pleasure typical of man-dominated visual narratives, replacing it with a representation that fosters connection, self-recognition, and understanding. The translation choices in this context amplify the subversive nature of

⁴³⁰ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 275.

⁴³¹ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 212.

⁴³² Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' p. 10.

⁴³³ Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' p. 10.

Francescho's work. Udina's use of 'retrats' (portraits) instead of 'pictures' emphasises the humanising effect of Francescho's art, which focuses on the face as the site of identity and expression. This stands in stark contrast to the usual objectification these women endure as sex workers, where they are typically reduced to bodies and fragmented by the 'male gaze.' The shift in language underscores a broader feminist theme of empowerment within Francescho's art, where the women are no longer mere subjects of voyeuristic desire but complex individuals with agency. The excerpts also evidence a marked difference in the reaction of the women to the portraits. In the text in English, 'airs and graces' relates to attitude, self-importance, and social confidence, as the women see themselves in the portraits. The phrase has a slightly ironic tone: it implies not only pride, but a transformation in self-perception that comes from empowerment, while sustaining the mocking critique in the Madame's tone. Their gained sense of agency disrupts their subordination as sex workers. By contrast, the Catalan translation, 'es veuen precioses' (they see themselves as beautiful), foregrounds a very different register. The focus shifts toward appearance and beauty as a source of value, appointed by their status as sex workers. This change subtly reframes the transformation in terms of external aesthetics rather than internal empowerment, as the emphasis of the portraits is shifted to beauty, an aspect left to ambiguity in the source text. While both texts emphasise the women's empowerment, the Catalan text subscribes to a more conventional framework within patriarchal structures, missing an opportunity to sustain the radical feminist critique of the source text.

This feminist reimagining is vividly reflected in Francescho's rejection of traditional man-dominated artistic representations, such as his decision not to adhere to the conventional portrayal of St Lucia. By rejecting these archetypal depictions, Francescho resists the objectification and commodification of women that is prevalent in much of patriarchal visual culture. This resistance mirrors his treatment of the women in the brothel, where his portraits serve as a subversive counter-narrative to the ways in which the 'male gaze' typically consumes women's bodies. Unlike the objectifying remark made by George's father about the woman in the pornographic film, where the female body is reduced to a spectacle, Francescho's portraits offer an alternative mode of representation that actively empowers those who are usually marginalised. Moreover, Francescho's commitment to subversive representation extends beyond the brothel. While painting the months for Borse, Francescho makes a radical decision in his depiction of March by painting a guardian figure as an

‘infidel,’ in this instance, a Black man, using the most striking blue in his possession.⁴³⁴ This portrayal is significant, as it disrupts the dominant Eurocentric visual norms, particularly those that align the exoticised ‘Other’ with fear, inferiority, or subjugation. When the Falcon requests that Francescho remove this figure, he resists, negotiating to keep the ‘infidel’ in the final work and, thus, challenging the racial prejudices. The impact of this decision on the represented community is revealed later when Francescho’s apprentice Ercole informs him that groups of workers, particularly those labelled as ‘infidels’ and field labourers, visit the depiction of March in large numbers, sometimes as many as twenty at a time.⁴³⁵ These workers, who come explicitly from marginalised communities, not only admire the figure but also leave flowers as offerings and stand in contemplation for long periods.⁴³⁶ This reaction suggests a powerful identification with Francescho’s representation. At this moment, art transcends its aesthetic function and becomes a tool for social and political recognition, in the same way as Carol’s political art pieces reveal the impact of art on society, crossing over between politics and art. It also underlines how art can act as a space of reverence and resistance, offering marginalised groups a sense of visibility and dignity that is otherwise denied in broader society.

How to be Both employs Francescho’s and George’s narratives to explore the dual nature of representation, whether in art, media, or culture, as a force that can perpetuate suffering or become a pathway to empowerment, amongst other outcomes. This tension underscores the novel’s central theme of ‘bothness,’ where binary oppositions, such as empowerment versus exploitation, are not merely juxtaposed but actively interrogated and contrasted. In a similar way, this thesis highlights the bothness of translation, and the systems of entanglement between the texts, as a translation is, in itself bothness too. The text critiques how marginalised figures, particularly women and minorities, are often exploited in visual and cultural representations. However, it simultaneously illustrates how art, when wielded ethically and used to represent these communities in a humanising way, can transform dynamics of exploitation and oppression into ones of agency and reclamation. This process

⁴³⁴ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 310.

⁴³⁵ Smith, *How to be both*, pp 355-6.

⁴³⁶ Smith, *How to be both*, pp 355-6.

of transformation is central to the importance of translation, and it particularly highlights the art in feminist translation, which aims to an ethical practice that precisely intervenes in dynamics of exploitation and oppression. In this sense, art becomes a medium for self-expression and social critique and change, challenging oppressive structures and amplifying voices typically silenced.

The theme of representation and perception, particularly within the dynamic of 'looking' and 'being looked at,' culminates when the two protagonists intersect across time and narrative space. Although Francescho and George exist in different temporal realities, their stories are intertwined through acts of watching and interpreting. George, in the present, researches Francescho's artwork as part of her own identity formation, influenced by her mother's fascination with Francescho's art. She attempts to make Francescho the subject of a class project, engaging with his legacy across centuries. In Francescho's narrative segment, he exists in a state between life and death, oscillating between observing George from his ghostly vantage point and reliving the memories of his own life. This blurring of past and present allows Francescho to navigate modern time, which he perceives as a form of purgatory, a temporal limbo where he lacks the context to understand it as the future. This purgatory serves as both a space for reflection and a threshold between different temporalities as he follows George and re-experiences critical moments from his past. This interaction between Francescho and George creates a narrative reversal: while George, living in the present, engages with her mother's memories and tries to connect with Francescho's art, Francescho, now dead, recounts his life as he confronts the legacy he has left behind. The novel's exploration of temporality and storytelling therefore becomes a conversation across time, blurring the boundaries between the living and the dead, and between past and present. This approach challenges the fixed nature of history and identity, suggesting that both are fluid and shaped by overlapping narratives.

It is precisely in this interaction between the protagonists that the theme of looking and being looked at resurfaces and reveals some gendered assumptions or gender expectations. One particularly significant moment occurs when Francescho, as a ghost, observes George and initially perceives her as a boy. This misrecognition is only corrected when Francescho hears George's voice, which he interprets as an expression of 'undisguised' femininity, something that, for Francescho, becomes a definitive marker of identity. This scene opens up a complex reflection on the fluidity and performativity of gender. This moment

underscores how Francescho's gaze, initially guided by external visual cues, is challenged and reshaped by auditory perception, becoming a more definitive indicator of gender. Francescho's evolving perception of George highlights the novel's broader interrogation of gender binaries. Francescho, whose own identity transcends traditional gender roles, engages with George's identity in a way that further complicates traditional notions of gender. The ambiguity in this interaction reinforces the idea that gender is not a static, easily definable category but rather something fluid and performative that, from Francescho's lived experiences, is a negotiation of social perception and personal identity. Just as Francescho's art challenges the rigid categories of subject and object, so too does this encounter challenge the binaries of gender identity as a superimposed category to that of sex, opening up a space for a more inclusive, nuanced understanding of identity:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>This boy is a girl.</p> <p>I knew it.</p> <p>I know it cause [...] the boy [...] in the unbroken undisguised voice of what can only be a girl.⁴³⁷</p>	<p>Aquest noi és una noia.</p> <p>Ho sabia.</p> <p>Ho sabia perquè [...] el noi [...] amb la veu educada i aguda que només pot tenir una noia.⁴³⁸</p>

Smith's and Udina's texts are very different in this case, offering two separate portrayals of gender consciousness to the reader. The source text dictates that George's voice is 'unbroken' (understood not to be a teenage boy) and 'undisguised' (therefore different from Francescho, who is assumed to disguise his voice). In this way, the text depicts a Francescho

⁴³⁷ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 251.

⁴³⁸ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 195.

who deduces George's gender based on what she is not: neither a boy nor 'disguised' (trans). Crucially, Francescho would not have the linguistic category 'trans' available to him, as this is a contemporary term, however 'disguised' would relate to his experience as a socially trans man. This portrayal also reveals the limited view Francescho offers the reader regarding the concept of 'being both,' as his deduction aligns with the binary spectrum implied in 'both.' If George is not disguising herself as female, she must be a (cis) girl. This moment suggests that Francescho, despite his socially trans experience, still operates within a perceived binarity, where one is either a man or a woman. This could be further explored by examining how Francescho's lived experience navigating the binary system complicates his understanding of gender fluidity and the possibilities of 'bothness.' Ultimately, this deduction can be read as both limiting (as it does not deconstruct the binarity) and liberating, offering flexibility in considering both the navigation across said spectrum.

The translated text, conversely, identifies George's voice as 'educada i aguda' (polite/educated and high-pitched/acute). The dramatic shift in descriptive language places George not within the negative space of what she is not, often the position women are relegated to in patriarchal constructs, which relates to Kristeva's assertion of negativity but rather affirms her identity in terms of what she is. This affirmative portrayal of femininity gives George a presence embodied within the text. Moreover, the addition of 'educada' introduces a subtle yet significant layer of meaning. In choosing this term, the translator underscores cultural perceptions of femininity, suggesting that George's voice is not only feminine but also socially acceptable and cultivated. However, this translation could also be read as potentially reinforcing stereotypes associated with gendered voices. The use of 'educada' and 'aguda' may insinuate a value judgment, where polite and high-pitched voices are equated with femininity, and by extension, undisguised and unbroken voices are perceived as more appropriate or respectable. This, in turn, could imply that disguised or broken voices (associated with trans identities) are less so.⁴³⁹ Thus, the translation subtly

⁴³⁹ Lal Zimann explores the complexity of voice as both a biological and social construct, emphasising its role in trans embodiment: Lal Zimman, 'Transgender Voices: Insights on Identity, Embodiment, and the Gender of the Voice', *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 12.8 (2018), doi:[10.1111/lnc3.12284](https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12284).

shifts the focus from Francescho's deduction in the text in English to a broader cultural commentary on gender norms, opening up a space for both feminist and critical readings of how gender performance is linguistically shaped in translation.

Francescho also experiences introjected processes after his mother's death, similar to George's exploration. This exploration manifests through a disruptive narrative form that permeates the essence of the text itself. After being gradually dissuaded from wearing his mother's clothes, a coping mechanism of which Francescho is unaware, Francescho begins to use colons [:] to signal pauses, effectively replacing commas and full stops. This marks a significant differentiation in narrative style between Francescho's section and George's, as where George's narrative is characterised by temporal disruption, with shifts between past and present, Francescho's section is distinguished by the frequent and idiosyncratic use of colons. An example of this can be observed in the opening line of Francescho's narrative:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>Good : I like a good back : the best thing about a turned back is the face you can't see stays a secret : hey : you : can't hear me? Can't hear? No?⁴⁴⁰</p>	<p>Bé : m'agrada una bona esquena : el millor d'una esquena girada és que la cara que no veus es manté en secret : ep : tu : que em sents? No em sents? No?⁴⁴¹</p>

In this section, the use of colons is consistent across both texts. This disruption of form is particularly visual and easily transferable across the English and Catalan versions due to the similarities in alphabet, syntax, and the horizontal left-to-right orientation of the written form. As a result, the colon serves not merely as a syntactical device but as a conceptual one, inviting the reader to engage in a form of breath or pause that links and divides phrases

⁴⁴⁰ Smith, *How to be both*, p. 191.

⁴⁴¹ Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, p. 151.

simultaneously. The colon, therefore, mirrors the novel's theme of 'bothness' at multiple levels through the visual duality of the two dots and in its effect of distancing and connecting ideas within the sentence. Despite this formal consistency, notable differences between the English and Catalan texts emerge. In the English version, Francescho's voice appears to call out to George, who remains oblivious to the spectral presence hovering nearby: 'can't hear me? Can't hear?' The emphasis here is on Francescho's frustration at being unheard, suggesting an attempt at verbal communication that is primarily phonetic. However, Udina's text introduces a more nuanced interpretation of this scene through a subtle linguistic shift: 'que em sents? No em sents?' The Catalan verb 'sentir-se' can mean both 'to hear' and 'to feel,' extending the potential meanings of Francescho's question. It invites the possibility that Francescho is asking if George can hear him and if George can sense or feel his presence. This interpretation expands the interaction from a purely auditory question to a multisensory attempt at connection, heightening the tension between Francescho's invisible form and his desire to be perceived. The Catalan translation deepens Francescho's efforts to bridge the divide between his ghostly self and George, suggesting an attempt at emotional or physical connection rather than exclusively verbal communication. This rendering is further enhanced by the repeated use of colons, which reinforce the thematic tension between separation and connection, a duality that, as mentioned before, maintains the concept of 'bothness' central to the novel.

The canonical explanation for Francescho's use of colons is provided towards the conclusion of his section when his father reveals that Francescho's mother used to punctuate her writing in the same way: 'her habit of putting these 2 dots between clauses where a breath should come. / [Francescho:] It's my habit too.'⁴⁴² This moment of recognition ties together the narrative form and content as Francescho realises that his use of colons is an unconscious imitation of his mother's stylistic choices. This revelation is significant, as it underscores the theme of inherited trauma and how grief and memory can permeate and shape individual expression. The colons, then, become emblematic of Francescho's connection to his mother, representing both a linguistic and emotional inheritance that links past and present, parent and child, and which parallel George's processes of introjection. Just as George introjects

⁴⁴² Smith, *How to be both*, p. 337.

elements of her mother after her death, such as her mother's sense of humour or political engagement, Francescho's adoption of the colon can be seen as an unconscious act of preserving the mother's essence. Both George and Francescho embody their mothers through introjection, as they subconsciously mimic these small habits and personality traits, blurring the boundaries between self and other, past and present. In Francescho's case, the use of the colon acts as both a tribute to his mother and a way of keeping her alive in his internal narrative, much like George, who similarly navigates the loss of her mother by carrying forward aspects of her character. In Francescho's case, this introjection becomes integral to his narrative bothness. The two dots of the colon visually and conceptually reflect Francescho's experience of duality in that specific segment: caught between life and death, man and woman, past and present. This ongoing negotiation of duality is further emphasised by the fact that Francescho's use of colons is not a conscious choice but a habit that has permeated his style. Additionally, this habit of Francescho mirrors the broader theme of 'looking at and being looked at,' particularly in how introjection functions in the relationship between self and the Other. Just as Francescho observes George yet remains unseen by her, the colon operates as a point of invisibility within the text; a subtle mark that serves as a silence.

(De)mastering gender and other practices

Having provided evidence and examined how gender is conceptualised in the novel by the diverse narrators, this section turns to the broader ontological approaches to identity as two distinct approaches, one of mastering, and one of demastering. As articulated by Cixous, mastery is an omnipresent concept that pervades struggles across various spheres, whether between classes, peoples, or individuals.⁴⁴³ Cixous advocates for transcending mastery, calling for a break from its perpetuation in social and individual structures. Julietta

⁴⁴³ Hélène Cixous, 'Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays,' in *The Newly Born Woman*, by Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, trans. by Betsy Wing (University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 63–132 (78).

Singh furthers this discourse by arguing that the rise of collectives resisting mastery signals its potential collapse.⁴⁴⁴ This critique opens an important avenue for examining the complex depictions of gender in *How to be Both*, where George and Francescho exhibit divergent engagements with ‘mastery.’

Francescho’s mastery closely aligns with the practices of anticolonial intellectuals who, in their pursuit of liberation, engaged in mastery, whether corporeal, verbal, or intellectual, as a means of decolonisation.⁴⁴⁵ His expertise in painting confers societal power, shaping not only his art but also his control over the performance of his socially perceived gender. In this way, Francescho can be seen as participating in a form of ‘mastery of gender,’ akin to the technical processes of anticolonial intellectuals, where mastery is used as a tool to subvert hegemonic, binary structures imposed by colonial ideologies. Historically, colonial regimes enforced strict gender binaries to control bodies and maintain power. By mastering gender and leveraging this mastery, Francescho subverts these inherited systems of dominance. Ultimately, his journey reflects an intersection of mastery over art, labour, and gender. His proficiency in painting grants him societal power and allows him to construct and control his gender performance. Although this mastery aligns with a concept of decolonisation that creates empowered subjects, Francescho’s complicity in binary systems suggests he is not actively seeking to dismantle them. His mastery of gender performance can also be understood through Hegel’s master/slave dialectic.

In Hegel’s framework, two self-conscious individuals engage in a life-and-death struggle, with one emerging as the independent ‘master’ and the other as the dependent ‘slave.’⁴⁴⁶ In this dynamic, the master gains recognition and power, while the slave’s identity is shaped by subordination and dependence.⁴⁴⁷ Francescho’s ability to control how he is

⁴⁴⁴ Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Duke University Press, 2017), p. 1.

⁴⁴⁵ Singh, *Unthinking Mastery*, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Peter Fuss and John Dobbins (University of Notre Dame Press, 2019). pp. 94-5.

⁴⁴⁷ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 95.

perceived within a rigid binary system mirrors the role of the Hegelian master. Rather than directly challenging the patriarchal, binary-driven system, Francescho becomes complicit by mastering social perception and gender performance to his advantage. His success in passing as a man allows him to manipulate the system for social acceptance and power, much like Hegel's master subjugates the slave to affirm their dominance. Francescho's mastery of social perception and gender allows him to navigate a patriarchal world that insists on binary structures. Instead of undermining these structures, he uses them to his benefit, reinforcing his position within the system. His act of passing, while disrupting the essentialist aspects of the binary, remains an act of complicity, as he manipulates the system in a utilitarian way and attains individual (partial) freedom. Michel Serres poses the idea that 'he who likes to command can do so, but on one condition: the eyes of the producers, of the energetic and the strong, have to be poked out' aptly describes Francescho's approach to manhood.⁴⁴⁸ Through a non-essentialist lens, Francescho deconstructs some of the essentialist fallacies of the binary paradigm, thereby destabilising it. His mastery of gender, much like his mastery of painting, destabilises the logic of the binary system while simultaneously reflecting a more profound complicity in maintaining it. In other words, though Francescho alters the boundaries of the binary, his participation in it remains subordinate to patriarchal power dynamics. Thus, despite Francescho's progressive and subversive elements, his mastery reflects an internalisation of modern power structures, particularly those tied to gender politics. The novel's binary framing reveals the extent to which mastery is entangled with societal structures of control and legitimacy. Francescho's journey highlights the paradox of using mastery as a tool for liberation while remaining complicit in the very systems it seeks to challenge. Following Singh's definition of mastery as the ability to teach others a skill, Francescho's mastery over his gender performance positions him as a master of social perception. This mastery extends to his interactions with others, allowing him to subtly control how he is perceived within a patriarchal, binary-driven society. By mastering these dynamics, Francescho navigates the binary system to his advantage, maintaining social acceptance and recognition without openly defying gender norms.

⁴⁴⁸ Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. by Lawrence R. Schehr (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. 36.

In contrast, George's narrative offers a different relationship with the concept of mastery. While she attempts to master various rituals and practices, these efforts are marked by the freedom to embrace uncertainty, echoing her mother's teaching about the value of 'not knowing.' Unlike Francescho, George does not seek to master gender performance. Instead, she engages with identity more fluidly and uncertainly, embodying an alternative to Francescho's deliberate manipulation of gender norms. This refusal or inability to master gender in the same way offers a form of 'de-mastery' that challenges the assumption that mastery is essential for empowerment, presenting a more decolonial approach. George's exploration of identity reflects a more open-ended path, where mastery over the binary system is neither necessary nor desirable. Hegel's dialectic, the one-sided system where one subject is acknowledged and the other merely recognised, serves as a valuable framework for understanding Francescho's interaction with George.⁴⁴⁹ In their first and only encounter, Francescho, as a ghostly presence, observes and categorises George as a girl. This is a one-sided interaction: Francescho, the master of perception, defines George's gender based on external cues, such as her voice, without George's awareness or participation. In other words, Francescho 'others' George, reducing her identity to a singular, binary categorisation: 'this boy is a girl.' This interaction also reveals the limitations of Francescho's perspective. Although Francescho navigates the gender binary in unconventional ways, his perception of George as either a boy or a girl reinforces the same binary framework that he benefits from, without a space outside of the binary, but as a negotiation within it with the terminology available to him, highlighting the contrast of historical perspectives and how gender perceptions evolve throughout time, in this case reflecting the time and place that made Francescho a man socially in order to be an artist, and without an explicit reflection on identity or desire, but more as a performance for a specific purpose. George's lack of awareness of Francescho's presence evokes Hegel's concept of the 'slave,' who exists in a state of subordination, unaware of the ways the master is defining them. However, unlike Francescho, George does not engage in the struggle for mastery. She does not seek to define herself within the binary system, nor is she fully conscious of how others perceive her. Instead, her journey reflects a fluid, exploratory approach to identity that resists the binary

⁴⁴⁹ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 95-6.

constraints that Francescho manipulates. George's refusal to engage with gender mastery contrasts sharply with Francescho's deliberate control of social perception, offering a subtle critique of the need for mastery in achieving personal empowerment. Where Francescho exemplifies the mastery of binary structures, George embodies an alternative approach, suggesting that freedom and empowerment may lie in resisting mastery altogether.

The engagement with (de)mastery in *How to be Both* presents different processes of subjectivity, depending on whether the reader encounters George's or Francescho's narrative first. Both, however, expose the reader to gender consciousness and encourage the dismantling of gender-based presumptions maintained by dominant discourses. The patriarchal system legitimises itself by imposing a binary understanding of gender based on sexual difference, and language reflects these processes. Translation can propagate such perspectives across cultures, further entrenching these binaries, or, from a feminist translation standpoint, offer the opportunity to deconstruct and approach constrictive power dynamics transnationally. While Smith's novel subverts essentialist views of gender binaries, it remains complicit in reinforcing the binary paradigm. In this sense, the novel echoes Audre Lorde's assertion that 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.'⁴⁵⁰ Moreover, the juxtaposition between Francescho's mastery and George's resistance offers a broader critique of the binary system itself. Francescho benefits from mastering the binary, while George's non-compliance suggests the possibility of disengagement from it altogether. This disengagement, however, is not centred on gender, as George's narrative shows that her gender does not limit her aspirations or opportunities, especially in light of historical and contextual differences regarding gender roles. Ultimately, Francescho's complicity in mastering the binary presents a nuanced exploration of gender politics. By navigating the system for personal benefit rather than seeking to dismantle it, Francescho challenges the reader's understanding of gender subversion. In this case, mastery becomes a means of survival rather than a form of resistance.

⁴⁵⁰Audre Lorde, *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*, Penguin Modern, 23 (Penguin Books, 2018), p. ix.

Poetic Force: A Semiotic Encounter

As previous sections have analysed the portrayal of gender identity, the binary spectrum, and the gendered expectations in society as represented in both texts, with careful considerations for the textual effects and consistent evidence of a closeness between texts, this section turns to the formal disruption of the symbolic order in the novel. More specifically, it examines the experimental form in which prose breaks into verse. This formal rupture connects Francescho with George's segment, presenting a relevant case for the translation of experimental writing. These disruptions are reminiscent *A Hora da Estrela's* destabilisation of narrator voice, where the projection system is obliterated; here, however, a semiotic shift into verse takes place, a transformation that marks both a narrative and ontological passage beyond the self.

In *How to Be Both*, the shift from narrative to poetic form marks a crucial moment of aesthetic transformation and thematic exploration. Throughout the novel, Smith controls syntax within the more traditional narrative form to affect pacing; however, the narrative breaks into poetic form in two significant moments, introducing experimental formatting that adds dynamism to the scene. This shift occurs in the following fragments: one that opens Francescho's section and one that closes it. In both instances, the transition from linear prose to fragmented, non-linear syntax deliberately disrupts conventional narrative structures. The irregular use of colons, parentheses, and incomplete thoughts creates a sense of fluidity, resisting fixed meanings and mirroring Francescho's formation/dissolution of the ego. This breakdown of syntactical coherence engages with language in a way that echoes Kristeva's concept of the semiotic as introduced, meaning the pre-linguistic force tied to the body and emotions and not constrained by the symbolic/language. This mirrors the obliteration of the double death of Macabéa and Rodrigo in Lispector's *A Hora da Estrela*, where the characters experience freedom in an impossible space beyond language and the Symbolic, as explored in the first case study. In the same way, Francescho's ego is introduced and formed at the beginning of his section through this semiotic expression and dissolved at the end through the semiotic realm. This fluid, fragmented form contrasts with the symbolic order's fixed meanings, creating a space where the narrator's identity is expressed condensed and fluidly, and the structured constraints of language are temporarily suspended. This intentional

fragmentation allows for a reimagining of identity and narrative, creating a space where Francescho's particular identity can exist beyond the confines of established norms, reflecting the themes of transformation and liberation, and that, most importantly, calls into the attention of the reader Francescho's alternative form, in this case, that of a ghost. This segment opens his section, offering an unusual formatting that spirals as follows:

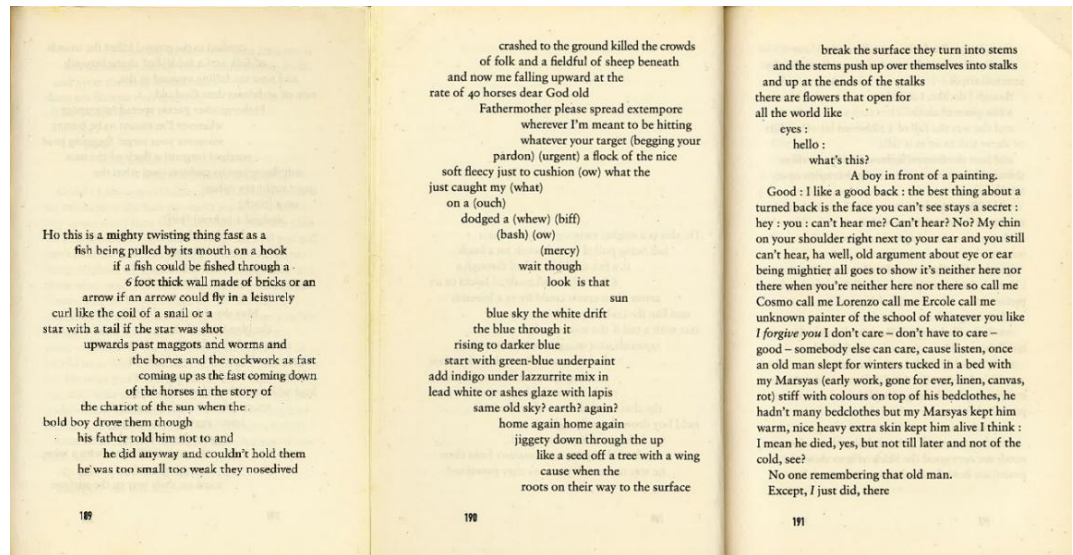


Figure 8. Ali Smith, *How to Be Both*, pp. 189-91. The scan of the book shows the spiralling formatting of the novel.

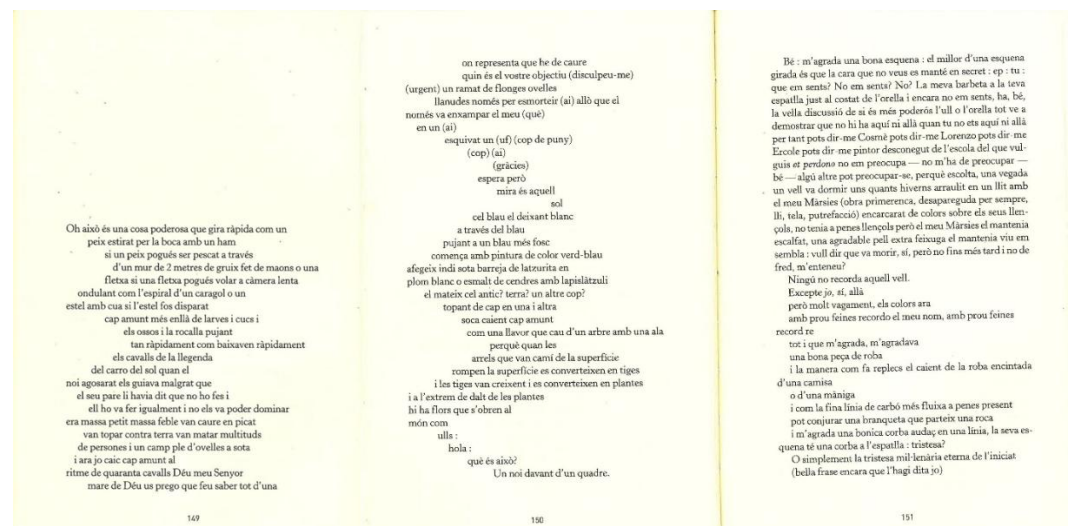


Figure 9. Dolors Udina i Abelló (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, pp. 149-51. The scan of the book shows the spiralling formatting of the novel.

The segments for relevant analysis from these pages read as follows:

Ali Smith	Dolors Udina i Abelló
<p>Fathermother please spread extempore</p> <p>wherever I'm meant to be hitting</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>soft fleecy just to cushion (ow) what the</p> <p>just caught my (what)</p> <p>on a (ouch)</p> <p>dodged a (whew) (buff)</p> <p>(bash) (ow)</p> <p>(mercy)</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>there are flowers that open for</p> <p>all the world like</p> <p>eyes :</p> <p>hello :</p>	<p>mare de Deu us prego que feu saber tot d'una</p> <p>on representa que he de caure</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>llanudes nomes per esmorteir (ai) allò que el</p> <p>només va enxampar el meu (què)</p> <p>en un (ai)</p> <p>esquivant un (uf) (cop de puny)</p> <p>(cop) (ai)</p> <p>(gràcies)</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>hi ha flors que s'obren al</p> <p>món com</p> <p>ulls :</p> <p>hola :</p>

what's this?	que es això?
A boy in front of a painting. ⁴⁵¹	Un noi davant d'un quadre. ⁴⁵²

This segment opens Francescho's narrative, introducing the reader to Francescho's after-death experience as he transcends time and enters the contemporary timeline, seemingly falling into it. The segment spirals, creating a sense of dynamism that enhances the semiotic power of its poetic formation while establishing Francescho's perspective. Concerning the text comparison analysis, Udina's translation reproduces the source's formatting and poetic structure. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate that both versions play with line breaks, visual spacing, and punctuation to convey the fragmented, stream-of-consciousness style that characterises Francescho's disorienting experience. Depending on the reader's narrative sequence, this opening passage also serves a dual purpose, either foreshadowing themes for those reading Francescho's segment first or reconnecting to them if George's section precedes it. Major themes like 'looking and being looked at' are re/introduced here, particularly with the metaphor of the eyes, as seen in the line that is reminiscent of Francescho's portrait of St Lucia and reads 'there are flowers that open for all the world like eyes.' The Catalan translation, 'flors que s'obren al món com ulls,' preserves the metaphor's visual imagery, maintaining its semiotic weight across both versions. Moreover, the form itself remains playful in both versions, particularly through the use of sound effects indicated by parentheses and onomatopoeic words such as 'ow,' 'whew,' 'buff,' and 'bash' in the source text. Udina's translation localises these effects, using expressions like 'ai,' 'uf,' 'cop de puny' (punch), and 'cop' (hit), which preserve the chaotic and dynamic tone while adapting the sounds to be more culturally familiar to Catalan readers. Interestingly, this localisation introduces a slight shift in specificity: 'cop de puny' (punch) is more specific than the English 'bash.' This adds a different physicality to the translated version while maintaining

⁴⁵¹ Smith, *How to be both*, pp. 190-1

⁴⁵² Udina (translation), *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, pp. 149-150.

the sense of chaotic action due to the lack of clarity over who throws or receives the punch, while losing the sound quality, as it transfers from an onomatopoeia to a noun.

A significant difference between the versions is found at the very beginning, where the source text uses ‘Fathermother,’ a fluid, double-binary invocation that merges two traditionally gendered terms (‘father’ and ‘mother’). This hybrid expression complicates conventional notions of gender, aligning with the novel’s broader exploration of identity and ‘bothness.’ The invocation of this deity ascribed with gender duality is both subversive and reflective of the novel’s larger thematic framework. It challenges traditional binaries and introduces a neologism that disrupts normative structures of power and identity. However, in the Catalan translation, Udina opts for ‘mare de Deu’ (Mother of God), which, while still addressing a divine figure, carries a distinctly feminine and Catholic tone. This shifts the gender subversiveness present in the source text into a more traditionally gendered and religious framework, one that emphasises motherhood and invokes the Virgin Mary. While this choice reflects the religious context of Francescho, who, as a Renaissance artist, painted Catholic iconography, it loses the source’s subversive qualities and linguistic innovation, reducing the invocation’s gender-blurring impact.

Another notable difference between the two versions lies in the translation of ‘mercy’ into ‘gràcies’ (thank you), a choice that significantly shifts both the tone and interpretive possibilities of the passage. In Smith’s version, ‘mercy’ appears as the final word in parentheses, marking the ending of Francescho’s physical altercation and suggesting a plea for or, alternatively, an acknowledgement of relief from pain. This use of ‘mercy’ also carries strong religious connotations, evoking a request for divine intervention or compassion, and situates the word within the broader thematic framework of religious discourse. However, Udina’s Catalan translation replaces ‘mercy’ with ‘gràcies,’ which shifts the meaning from a religious plea/acknowledgement to an expression of gratitude. Instead of selecting the more literal ‘misericòrdia’ (mercy) or ‘pietat’ (mercy), which would have preserved the religious undertones and aligned more closely with the divine context invoked earlier in the passage, Udina opts for ‘gràcies,’ a secular expression of thankfulness. This subtle yet significant change diminishes the ambiguity present in the source text, steering the reader toward an interpretation that frames Francescho’s reaction as a relief rather than as an appeal for divine mercy. By doing so, the translation reduces the multiplicity of interpretations available to the reader in the source text.

Following, the same formatting effect closes Francescho's section, where Francescho observes George and H painting eyes onto a wall. This act of creation becomes a form of ekphrasis, where art looks into the artist, forging a poignant synergy between past and present and retaining the motif of the eyes. This moment also follows the syntax breaks that illustrate Francescho's dissolution of the ego, as he transcends individual identity and dissipates, blurring the boundaries between self and other and seemingly becoming the white page.

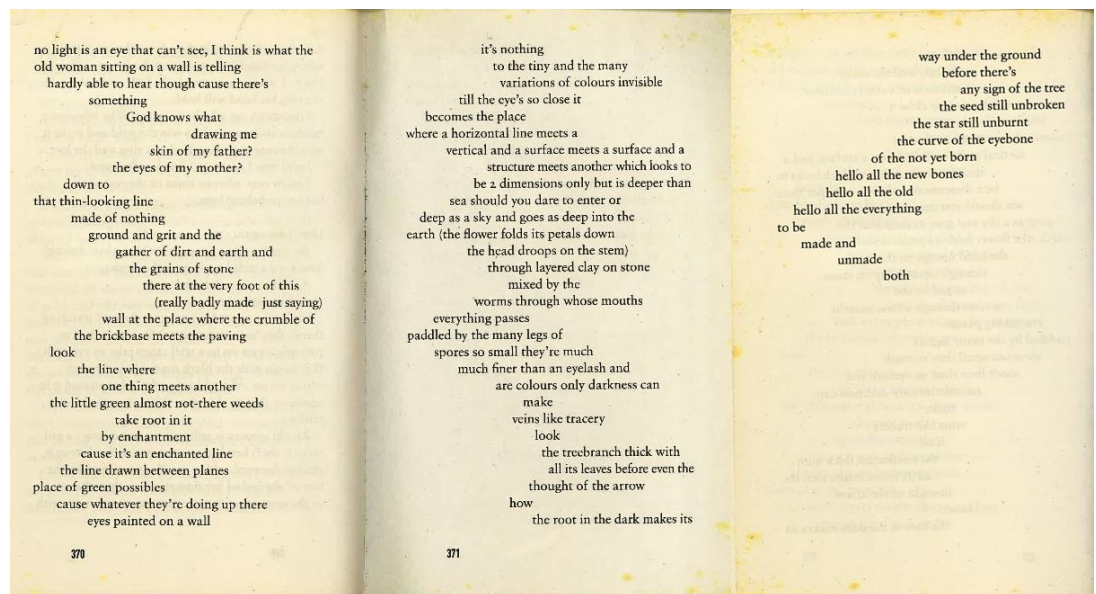


Figure 10. Ali Smith, *How to Be Both*, pp. 370-72. The scan shows the spiralling formatting of the novel.

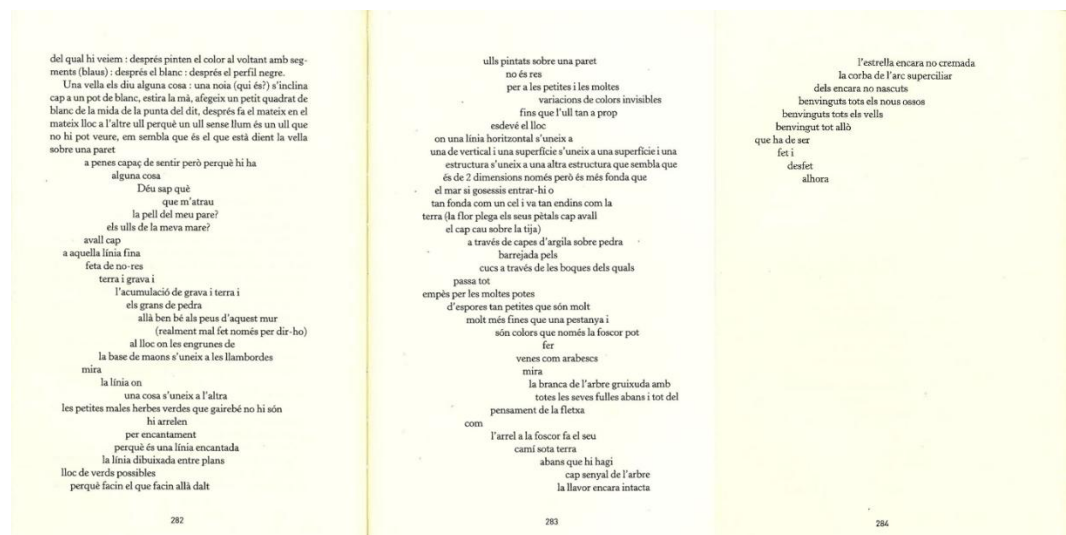


Figure 11. *Dolors Udina i Abelló (translation). Com Ser-ho Alhora, pp. 282-4. The scan of the book shows the spiralling formatting of the novel.*

The ending of this passage powerfully encapsulates the broader theme of ‘bothness’ in *How to Be Both*, marking a moment where identity is neither fixed nor singular, but dual. The text explicitly states ‘both,’ offering a brief yet radical disruption of the symbolic order. Through this semiotic breakdown, Smith challenges language’s rigid, patriarchal structures, proposing a vision of subjectivity and its relation to language that is open-ended, fluid, and perpetually in flux. The word ‘both’ becomes emblematic of this plasticity, stretched to become the complete novel to encompass its thematic core, either expanding to hold the entirety of the narrative or, conversely, condensing to distil its very essence. The term ‘both’ here acts as a linguistic container for identity, time, and space, holding within it the core tension and exploration of the novel, and on a more technical level, both versions of the published novel that offer each order of narratives. In Udina’s translation, Smith’s ‘both’ becomes ‘alhora’ (simultaneously), a shift that captures the simultaneity inherent in the concept of ‘bothness’ but subtly changes its focus. While ‘alhora’ preserves the idea of coexisting states, it moves away from Smith’s emphasis on duality toward an interpretation centred on simultaneity. This alters the thematic resonance, as the etymology of ‘alhora’ does not contain the binary implication of ‘both,’ potentially allowing for multiplicity rather than a strict duality.

This shift offers an interesting interpretative divergence: while Smith’s ‘both’ grapples with a spectrum of two, Udina’s translation introduces the possibility of something broader,

a multiplicity that does not necessarily hinge on binary opposition. This opens a radically different conceptual terrain for identity and gender in the novel. Where ‘both’ in the source text is grounded in the interplay of two forces, a duality that aligns with the binary spectrum, ‘alhora’ gestures toward an openness beyond dualism, a simultaneity that includes many possibilities. This translation effect preserves Francescos’ ambiguity while expanding it, offering a pluralistic reading that exceeds the constraints of a binary bothness. The temporal connotation embedded in ‘alhora’ adds another layer of meaning that aligns with Smith’s exploration of time and sequence throughout the novel. The notion of ‘at the same time’ thematically ties back to the dual structure of the book, where George’s and Francescho’s narratives exist simultaneously, though in different temporalities, and reinforces the idea of time collapsing between Renaissance Italy and contemporary England. Moreover, beyond its simultaneity, the translation deliberately avoids grammatical gender. In this instance, ‘both’ could have been rendered using a more idiomatic option such as ‘ambdós/ambdues,’ yet the translation retains a degree of stylistic awkwardness present in Smith’s title while circumventing gendered marking. This effect demonstrates a clear alignment between the experimental strategies of both texts. This provides evidence for translation as a process that expands and sustains broader meanings rather than collapsing them into a reduced term. Through lexical choices, translation can afford ambiguity, and in specific cases, radical alternatives such as this one. This demonstrates how translation functions as a practice of multiples. Translation with a feminist lens in particular benefits from such techniques, which afford multiplicity of meaning and offer new possibilities for interpretation and its potential for intersectional feminist impact.

Overall, the translation of *How to Be Both* by Udina preserves the novel’s intricate play with language and offers unique interpretive shifts highlighting the elasticity of meaning in Smith’s work. Through subtle linguistic choices, such as the translation of ‘hear’ as ‘sentir’ or ‘both’ as ‘alhora,’ Udina adds layers of depth that enrich the reading experience, while also reinterpreting key themes of fluidity, duality, and temporality. Translation itself is an act bothness: it occupies the space between the source text and the target context, trapped in scholarly discussions surrounding sameness and difference by invoking aspects of the source text while producing new content. Udina’s translation demonstrates this doubleness by echoing Smith’s rhythms and semantic ambiguities, while simultaneously reshaping them within the structure and resonances of Catalan. For example, as illustrated, ‘sentir’ extends ‘hear’ into a register that also includes feeling, multiplying the sensory and

affective dimensions of the text. Similarly, ‘ahora’ expands its ambiguity to contain multiples while sustaining the temporal layering of the source text, actively performing the themes of the imaginary text, and enacting the possibility of inhabiting two linguistic worlds at once. The exploration of Francescho’s semiotic creation and dissolution through poetic fragmentation and the novel’s overarching engagement with identity and artistic creation remains powerfully represented in the translation. However, the slight divergences in linguistic tone and emphasis in Udina’s version also invite readers to contemplate the theme of multiplicity and redirect the attention from ‘duality.’ Ultimately, both Smith’s text and Udina’s translation embody the novel’s central theme of ‘bothness,’ offering two interpretations that, while distinct, are interconnected, much like the characters and narratives that weave through *How to Be Both*.

5. *La Virgen Cabeza/Slum Virgin*

The preceding chapters examined feminist literary techniques employed by Clarice Lispector and Ali Smith and how the translations by Giovanni Pontiero, Benjamin Moser, and Maria Dolors Udina i Abelló navigate these techniques across languages. The analysis focused on how power dynamics are portrayed and negotiated in language and the diverse effects that the translations have employed to render these into a new linguistic context. For example, it explored the psycholinguistic deconstruction of patriarchal power dynamics between Rodrigo and Macabéa, George and Carol's psycholinguistic system of introjection, and they explored gendered social constructs, such as Francescho's negotiation of gender from a utilitarian perspective. This analysis demonstrated how portraying identity and literary power dynamics across cultural contexts is complex and can be defined as a process of negotiation, where subtle translation effects modulate the ontology of the characters as well as the power dynamics between them. This is the case of the following section, which analyses the negotiation of a community's identity and narrative power dynamics in the translation of Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's *La Virgen Cabeza* (The Virgin Head) (2009), translated into English (US) by Frances Riddle and titled *Slum Virgin* (2017). This novel belongs to the 'Trilogía oscura' (Dark Trilogy) consisting of *La Virgen Cabeza*, *Beya (Le viste la cara a Dios)* (Beya [You Saw God's Face]) (2011), and *El Romance de la Negra Rubia* (The Romance of the Black Blonde) (2014).⁴⁵³

The selection of this text stems from its intricate cultural and linguistic complexities, which present significant challenges for translation, requiring, in some instances, the use of broadly referred to as feminist translation techniques (albeit all techniques can be reframed as feminist depending on articulation and purpose). In this chapter, the central topics of interest to examine the power dynamics and portrayal of marginalised individuals are the translation of the source text's culturally placed lexicon and the power dynamics between the narrator and protagonist, Qüity, and the othered protagonist, Cleopatra. For example, one

⁴⁵³ Juan Martínez Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra en La Virgen Cabeza de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' *Clepsydra. Revista de Estudios de Género y Teoría Feminista*, 17, 2018, 11–26 (p. 12) <<https://doi.org/10.25145/j.clepsydra.2018.17.01>>.

notable challenge lies in the use of the term *negro* which in Argentina carries multiple signification, referring to both black individuals and those living in poverty; it can also be used in an endearing way as it will be examined. Negotiating the racial and social class related sensitivity of this topic becomes crucial in conveying the intended meaning accurately, especially in a cultural context where these identities intersect and complicate the translation in English, such as in the case of one of the protagonists, Cleopatra. Additionally, the highly localised contextual identities, such as *travesti*, further challenge the adaptation task for an Anglophone readership. This is particularly evident in portraying characters like Cleopatra, where an accurate rendering requires a delicate balance, in order to ensure comprehension and cultural resonance for the target audience. As such, the translator's presence becomes more pronounced, highlighting the need for a dynamic approach that acknowledges and addresses these challenges proactively.

The cultural significance of *La Virgen Cabeza* and *Slum Virgin* can be found in its engagement with the intersection identities of marginalised communities oppressed by dominant structures such as the white upper class, heterosexuality, patriarchy, and cisnormativity. The novel's subversiveness of power dynamics and radical portrayal of marginalised identities presents a particular challenge for translation and a great opportunity for Feminist Translation Studies to analyse the potential gaps and relevant feminist aspects if the migration of the text from the Argentinean context to the US. As Wittle observes:

The empirical and sociological analyses undertaken have shown that it is only by understanding and accepting that linguistic barriers still exclude the vast diversities of trans and non-trans identities, that we can possibly begin to accept that gender, like race, simply does not exist other than as an idea that has gained immeasurable power within the economies of social discourse.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵⁴ Stephen Whittle, 'Foreword,' in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by SUSn Stryker and Stephen Whittle (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), pp. xi–xvi (xiv).

At its core, the novel revolves around Cleopatra, a deeply empathetic figure embodying marginalisation. As it will be demonstrated in this chapter, her narrative resists erasure, offering a platform for alternative forms of expression, such as oral culture, forms often silenced or forgotten, much like the communities they represent. Cleopatra's life, marked by severe trauma, including the abuse by her father, a policeman, and gang rape by an entire police department, becomes a metaphor for the role of law enforcement in upholding systemic oppression and the normative status quo, and in reverse, highlights the struggle faced by those under the *travesti* identity in Argentina, a controversial label that is examined in this section. This portrayal reflects the complex duality of *travestis* in Argentine culture, who are simultaneously subjects of societal fascination and targets of oppression. The novel reclaims these narratives, exploring themes of community, leadership, and resistance, while also exposing the persistent power imbalances within relationships. For instance, Qüity's dismissal of Cleopatra's religious beliefs and the class-based struggles embedded in their dynamic illustrate the intersections of oppression and privilege. Translating such a text presents both opportunities and challenges. It allows for the celebration and subversion of marginalised identities within new cultural contexts, but it also requires careful navigation of the cultural and linguistic sensitivities of the target audience. Terms like *negro* in Argentina, laden with racial and socioeconomic connotations are often oversimplified or relegated to academic discussions, and as a result circumvented in translation such as this one. Similarly, identities like *travestis* are sometimes reduced for accessibility, with terms like 'transvestite' and, in the case of this translation, 'drag queen,' choices that risk erasing the nuance and cultural specificity of the source text.

As Esther Newton observes, 'the deeper stigma of homosexuality [cannot] be eliminated while the antagonistic and asymmetrical relations between men and women persist.'⁴⁵⁵ This insight resonates with Cleopatra's portrayal, highlighting how patriarchy perpetuates stigmatisation by othering women and linking homosexuality to marginalised identities. At its core, this hierarchy centres the cisgender, heterosexual, white, middle- or upper-class man as the dominant identity. Cleopatra's character subverts these expectations, challenging societal roles and normative frameworks, and presenting a great opportunity for

⁴⁵⁵ Newton, *Mother Camp*, p. xiii.

the translator to engage in feminist discourses and support the navigation of these identities in a manner visible to other contexts. Wittle goes on to expand on this: ‘Homophobia and sexism are not based on your genitals or with whom you sleep, but on how you perform the self in ways that are contraindicative to the heteronormative framework.’⁴⁵⁶ This resistance also critiques the progressive stereotypes often imposed by dominant nations’ perspectives on trans* identities.⁴⁵⁷ Instead, the novel emphasises the socio-cultural embeddedness and plurality of gender identities in Latin America. Through translation, these struggles adapt and transform, reflecting other issues pertaining to the marginalisation of identities in the receiving culture. Thus, examining translations of works like *La Virgen Cabeza*, *How to Be Both*, and *A Hora da Estrela* reveals their potential as tools for deconstruction, alterity, and the celebration of plurality. These texts hold great promise for advancing equality but demand careful, sensitive engagement to navigate the complexities of cultural exchange.

As Susan Stryker explains:

Most broadly conceived, the field of transgender studies is concerned with anything that disrupts, denaturalises, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we generally assume to exist between the biological specificity of the sexually differentiated human body, the social roles and statuses that a particular form of body is expected to occupy, the subjectively experienced relationship between a gendered sense of self and social expectations of gender-role performance, and the cultural mechanisms that work to sustain or thwart specific configurations of gendered personhood.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ Whittle, ‘Foreword,’ p. xii.

⁴⁵⁷ The term ‘trans*’ is explored in this chapter in detail with regards to Cleopatra’s identity.

⁴⁵⁸ Susan Stryker, ‘(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies,’ in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), pp. 1–17 (3).

This perspective naturally intersects with feminist studies and, more specifically, Feminist Translation Studies. The field does not only examines how translations can redirect systems of knowledge but also aims to amplify marginalised voices and reshapes how these voices are presented, overlapping in its focus of interest with Transgender Studies. In literary translation, Feminist and Queer Translation Studies offer immense potential to engage with Queer Studies, highlighting cultural conceptualisations of identity and sexuality, and negotiating their representation in new cultural contexts. Here, the translator becomes an agent of change, facilitating the elevation of voices that challenge normative frameworks and enrich cultural discourse.

5.1 Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, Frances Riddle, *Slum Virgin*

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, a contemporary Argentine writer, was born in San Isidro, Buenos Aires, in 1968. Her work has been celebrated by many critics, such as *La Virgen Cabeza* (2009), which garnered recognition from critics like Carolina Ruiz for its polyphonic narrative, representation of dissident bodies, and exploration of the biopolitical forces shaping people's lives, amongst other aspects.⁴⁵⁹ Cabezón Cámara's work aligns with the 'Nueva Narrativa Argentina' (NNA), a term coined by Elsa Drucaroff to describe Argentine novels produced since the 1980s.⁴⁶⁰ This literary movement emphasises autobiography, social themes, and a narrative perspective that highlights society's often marginalised and silenced demographics.⁴⁶¹ Other notable examples of NNA include works by Ricardo Piglia,

⁴⁵⁹ Carolina Ruiz, 'Cuerpos y literatura disidente. La Virgen Cabeza, de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara.,' *Badebec*, 6.12 (2017), 352–65.

⁴⁶⁰ Elsa Drucaroff, 'Los prisioneros de la torre. Política, relatos y jóvenes en la postdictadura,' *Amerika. Mémoires, identités, territoires*, 6 (2011), doi:[10.4000/amerika.2959](https://doi.org/10.4000/amerika.2959). This connection has been noted by: Adrián Alberto Ponze, 'La Virgen Cabeza: Las Voces de La Villa y de Las Diversidades Sexuales,' *Antares*, 9.17 (2017), 32–49 <<https://hal.science/hal-01782414>> [accessed 9 April 2024].

⁴⁶¹ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 12.

Samanta Schweblin, and Mariana Enríquez.⁴⁶² The NNA movement emerged after the last military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1983), spurring a collective interest in exploring and processing trauma and emphasising democratic ideals. This era laid the groundwork for the presidency of Raúl Alfonsín (1983-1989), which aimed to stabilise the economy and strengthen democratic governance.⁴⁶³ Nevertheless, Carlos Menem's subsequent presidency (1989-1995) brought significant economic shifts that reshaped Argentine society.⁴⁶⁴ Menem's administration implemented neoliberal policies to address economic stagnation, prioritising the privatisation of public assets, market deregulation, and deficit reduction.⁴⁶⁵ While these measures were intended to revitalise the economy, they exacerbated social inequality and increased unemployment and job insecurity.⁴⁶⁶

In Buenos Aires, particularly in the southern *conurbano bonaerense*, a metropolitan belt surrounding Buenos Aires, these economic shifts fostered selective investment and the neglect of many areas, culminating in the proliferation of *villas miseria* (shantytowns).⁴⁶⁷ The fictional *El Poso* in *La Virgen Cabeza* is set within this context and the choice of naming the place *El Poso* is particularly significant due to its lexical ambiguity which leverages the similarity between *poso* and *pozo*. Liliana Tozzi argues that the term incorporates both

⁴⁶² See: Verónica Alejandra de la Torre Cervantes, 'Indicios de una herencia dialógica. Análisis comparativo de la Nueva Narrativa Argentina en dos cuentos de Samanta Schweblin y Mariana Enríquez,' *Redoma*, 1.3 (2022), pp. 35–35, doi:[10.48778/redoma.v1i3.1264](https://doi.org/10.48778/redoma.v1i3.1264); Drucaroff, *Los Prisioneros de la Torre*.

⁴⁶³ For further information on this transitioning, see: Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture, Revised and Updated with a New Epilogue* (Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2011) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=665409>> [accessed 5 June 2024] and *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, and Politics*, ed. by Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela R. Montaldo, *The Latin America Readers* (Duke University Press, 2002).

⁴⁶⁴ María Eugenia Crovara, 'Pobreza y Estigma En Una Villa Miseria Argentina,' *Política y Cultura*, 22, 2004, pp. 29–45 (p. 30) <http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_abstract&pid=S0188-77422004000200003&lng=es&nrm=iso&tlng=es> [accessed 15 May 2024].

⁴⁶⁵ Crovara, 'Pobreza y Estigma En Una Villa Miseria Argentina,' p. 30.

⁴⁶⁶ Crovara, 'Pobreza y Estigma En Una Villa Miseria Argentina,' p. 30.

⁴⁶⁷ Crovara, 'Pobreza y Estigma En Una Villa Miseria Argentina,' pp. 31.

meanings: *pozo* to refer to a well, a geographical feature often associated with marginal neighbourhoods, where rainwater collects, and *poso* which denotes the sediment left at the bottom, something disposable.⁴⁶⁸ This layered meaning aligns with the novel's depiction of *El Poso* as a villa situated physically at the bottom of the area, symbolising its residents' position at the lower end of the social hierarchy.⁴⁶⁹ Thus, the name encapsulates both the geographical and sociopolitical marginalisation of the community, reinforcing the text's broader commentary on systemic inequality. *Villas miseria* have a particularly long history in Argentina, with one of the earliest recorded instances dating back to approximately 1930, when widespread unemployment following the 1929 financial crash led to the formation of 'Villa Desocupación' in Puerto Nuevo.⁴⁷⁰ Scholars have then identified that from the 1990s onward, being from a *villa* (town/village) or *barrio* (neighbourhood) evolved from a geographic identifier to an ideological marker, deepening social prejudices and reinforcing socio-economic divisions, and by the 1940s, these shantytowns had become an integral part of urban life in Argentina.⁴⁷¹

This democratic and turbulent era created a space for writers to critique and engage with the social challenges that emerged from the socio-economic landscape, mirroring the nation's ongoing struggles and transformations. Cabezón Cámara and her contemporaries in the NNA address these themes, offering a critical lens on Argentina's socio-political conditions, as will be seen in *La Virgen Cabeza*. Nevertheless, the categorisation of Cabezón Cámara's work is malleable and not absolute, which has allowed critics to link it with various currents in Argentine literature, such as 'the newest Argentine novel,' 'New Argentine

⁴⁶⁸ Liliana Tozzi, 'Representaciones del espacio urbano y configuraciones identitarias en la literatura argentina del siglo XXI,' *Visitas al Patio*, 11, 2017, 69–87 (p. 83) <<https://doi.org/10.32997/2027-0585-vol.0-num.11-2017-1897>>.

⁴⁶⁹ Tozzi, 'Representaciones del espacio urbano,' p. 83.

⁴⁷⁰ Crovara, 'Pobreza y Estigma En Una Villa Miseria Argentina,' p. 35.

⁴⁷¹ Crovara, 'Pobreza y Estigma En Una Villa Miseria Argentina,' p. 31, 35.

Narrative,’ and, more broadly, ‘social literature.’⁴⁷² While these classifications provide relevant insights for understanding aspects of Cabezón Cámara’s literary contributions, they are not the central focus of this analysis. Instead, this study focuses on the socio-economic elements of her novel and their relation to character subjectivities, particularly how these elements are negotiated in translation, best aligned with the NNA’s framework.

La Virgen Cabeza, set in the suburbs of Buenos Aires, narrates the collective experience of the El Poso community, focusing on the perspectives of Qüity and Cleopatra. The primary voice in the narrative is that of Qüity, who documents the unfolding events of the community and develops a romantic relationship with Cleopatra who has established and led a religious community devoted to the Virgin Mary. Cleopatra’s voice is presented through transcribed audio recordings interspersed as selected chapters, offering insight into her perspective on the ongoing happenings of the community and her romantic relationship with Qüity. Qüity’s fascination with Cleopatra and the opportunity of documenting the story as a way of establishing herself within the journalistic sphere propels her to move to El Poso early on and fully engage in chronicling the development of the community. Under Cleopatra’s leadership, El Poso begins to experience an era of prosperity and social cohesion despite enduring significant challenges such as city conflicts, crime, drug problems, and entrenched poverty. However, this fragile prosperity is disrupted by the intervention of real estate developers driven by profit, culminating in the deployment of armed forces upon the community and resulting in a terrible massacre. In the aftermath of this devastation, the relationship between Qüity and Cleopatra deepens, evolving into a familial bond that includes their daughter. They escape to a Caribbean island, and eventually, make their way into Miami. Meanwhile, Qüity continues to document the history of El Poso, contributing to the retrospective account that forms the novel *La Virgen Cabeza*, and aids Cleopatra in producing a cumbia opera that secures financial success. Later on, at the very end of the novel, Cleopatra, having maintained her recognition as a religious leader, plans to expand

⁴⁷² For ‘New Argentine Narrative’ see: Ana Gallego Cuiñas, ‘Comienzos de La Novísima Novela Argentina (2001-2011),’ *Hispanamérica*, 44.130 (2015), 3–14 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43684417>> [accessed 9 April 2024]; For “social literature”, please see: Tozzi, ‘Representaciones del espacio urbano.’

her influence and messaging by taking her mission to Cuba, and so leaves, with a letter left for Qüity to find. The narrative concludes with Qüity's poignant reflection on Cleopatra's departure for Cuba without confiding in her first, expressing a solemn resolve to reunite with her. Overall, the narrative of *La Virgen Cabeza* serves as a reflective piece, emphasising the growth of the El Poso, the evolution of the protagonists' relationship, and the rising tensions between the slum and the broader urban environment.

The novel *La Virgen Cabeza* comprises twenty-five chapters and an epilogue structured around a central narrative featuring two distinct voices. The primary narrator, Qüity, assumes control of twenty chapters, using a journalistic style, elements of crime fiction, and testimonial literature.⁴⁷³ In contrast, Cleopatra, affectionately referred to as Cleo, offers her perspective through five interspersed chapters. These chapters are articulated through Cleopatra's voice and marked by the colloquial slang and vernacular of El Poso's residents, providing readers with a culturally embedded linguistic specificity.⁴⁷⁴ For the purposes of this analysis, Cleopatra's importance is understood as beyond her role as a community leader and religious figure; and framed as a great example of fluid identity and expression. The following section of the thesis seeks to explore this dimension through a comparative analysis of the source text and its translation, with a focus on culturally specific expressions of identity, such as Cleopatra's identity as a *travesti*. It will examine how the translation negotiates this non-mappable identity to ensure that Anglophone readers can comprehend Cleopatra's role and significance as a *travesti*, understanding the community's relevance and portrayal, even in the absence of direct cultural equivalents in the target

Frances Riddle, from the United States, is the translator of *Slum Virgin*. Her specialisation lies in translating Latin American literature, and her academic journey includes obtaining an MA in Translation Studies from the University of Buenos Aires. She is regarded as a promising figure in the field, collaborating with renowned publishers such as New Directions, Dalkey Archive Press, and Charco Press. Her body of work includes translations of prominent Latin American authors like Isabel Allende, Claudia Piñeiro, and

⁴⁷³ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 15.

⁴⁷⁴ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 15.

Andrea Jeftanovic, demonstrating her adeptness in handling varied literary styles and themes.⁴⁷⁵

This translation of *La Virgen Cabeza* is among the first works by Gabriela Cabezón Cámara to be introduced in the US context, published by Charco Press. Charco Press, whose name references the colloquial term *cruzar el charco*, meaning ‘crossing the puddle’ to denote transatlantic travel, positions itself as a cultural and linguistic bridge dedicated to showcasing contemporary Latin American literature to English-speaking audiences.⁴⁷⁶ With a commitment to curating a selection that highlights the diversity of voices from the region, Charco Press states to aim to present captivating, intellectually stimulating, and thought-provoking works by emerging talents.⁴⁷⁷ Given this mission, *Slum Virgin* introduces Cabezón Cámara’s narrative style to the Anglophone audiences and seeks to establish a readership that appreciates the production of Latin American fiction. An analysis of this translation (reviewed in the following section) reveals that, alongside certain stylistic modifications, Frances Riddle effectively employs diverse translative techniques, including, for example, supplementation. This approach helps bridge cultural and contextual gaps, enhancing the connection between the source text and the English-speaking audience. Nevertheless, this study will also examine areas where further contextualisation could enrich the understanding of Cleopatra’s multifaceted identity, offering greater depth and insight into her portrayal.

⁴⁷⁵ Some examples include: Claudia Piñeiro, *Elena Knows*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Charco Press, 2021); Isabel Allende, *Violeta*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022); Claudia Piñeiro, *A Little Luck*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Charco Press, 2023); and Claudia Piñeiro, *Time of the Flies*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Charco Press, 2024), amongst others.

⁴⁷⁶ ‘About,’ *Charco Press* <<https://charcopress.com/about>> [accessed 5 November 2024].

⁴⁷⁷ ‘About,’ *Charco Press*.

5.2 *La Virgen Cabeza* and *Slum Virgin*: A Comparative Analysis

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's *La Virgen Cabeza* provides a compelling case study for developing a theoretical framework to understand queer identities in Argentina, particularly those that are localised and non-mappable in other contexts, such as the US. The narrative, both in its specific form and its literal representation, embodies a defiant, multifaceted essence of queerness that extends beyond dominant and hegemonic LGBTQ+ classifications from Anglophone contexts. With regards to specific representation, the novel places its interest in Cleopatra, one of the protagonists who serves as a focal point and active agent for the narrative's action, as a rising community leader within El Poso. As a *travesti* woman of colour from a *villa miseria*, who lives in poverty, is a sex worker, and whose sexual identity evolves from straight to self-identified lesbian, Cleopatra exemplifies a highly intersectional specificity of one of the marginalised communities in Argentina, an intersectionality present also in other Latin American countries.⁴⁷⁸ The concept of queer in the context of this analysis, as well as trans* with its inherent multiplicity and plasticity, are well-suited for analysing Cleopatra's portrayal. Here, 'queer' follows David M. Halperin's interpretation, grounded in Michel Foucault's foundational ideas, as a radical departure from fixed sexual identities.⁴⁷⁹ Unlike gay or lesbian identities, which are rooted in a defined homosexual object-choice, queer identity is unanchored, lacking any inherent truth or stable reality.⁴⁸⁰ As a term, 'queer' denotes an identity without a particular essence, deriving its meaning through an oppositional stance to normative constructs, in this case understanding the terms gay and lesbian as also normative in their formulation, and therefore, it refers to a polyform amalgamation of aspects and identities that deviate from the 'normal,' 'legitimate,' and

⁴⁷⁸ For more on please see the section 2.2.2 .

⁴⁷⁹ David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁴⁸⁰ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, p. 61.

dominant.⁴⁸¹ In other words, within this context, ‘queer’ signifies anything that deviates from the normative and dominant, embodying an identity without fixed essence.⁴⁸²

This non-specificity enables the umbrella of ‘queer’ to challenge the rigid categories and hierarchies that support traditional sexual and gender identities, serving as a horizon of possibility that reimagines relations among sexual behaviours, erotic identities, gender constructions, knowledge systems, and community practices.⁴⁸³ Nevertheless, this positionality has been critiqued for potentially erasing the specific experiences of gay and lesbian individuals and for promoting an illusion of equality that does not account for the existing power dynamics within the community.⁴⁸⁴ It also risks positioning gay and lesbian identities as essentialists, subjecting them to condescension from queer theorists.⁴⁸⁵ Within this term, ‘queer’ emphasises fluidity and defiance of normative constraints, fostering a critique of established power structures and inspiring new cultural forms, with the implied caveat of its two most significant gaps: its potential for criticism of other LGBTQ+ identities and its implied horizontality which does not correlate with the actual dynamics at place in the world.⁴⁸⁶

As such, ‘queer’ functions less as a label and more as a dynamic site for exploring and redefining identity in relation to hegemonic cultural narratives.⁴⁸⁷ In this light, Cabezón Cámara’s work exemplifies this fluid discourse of oppositionality to the dominant discourse, presenting a unique challenge for feminist translation due to its contextuality, fluidity, and subversion of cis and heteronormative identities, as well as socio-economic and race-based

⁴⁸¹ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, p. 61.

⁴⁸² Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, p. 61.

⁴⁸³ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, p. 61.

⁴⁸⁴ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, pp. 64-5.

⁴⁸⁵ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, pp. 64-5.

⁴⁸⁶ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, p. 79.

⁴⁸⁷ More on framing queer as a practice or set of processes rather than essence, please see: Héctor Domínguez Rubalcava, *Translating the Queer: Body Politics and Transnational Conversations* (Zed Books, 2016).

power dynamics.⁴⁸⁸ This aligns with her work in the NNA, as it explicitly explores the alternative to hegemonic positions by focusing on those whose ontology is placed in the sphere of the marginalised. The term ‘queer’ itself is also used within the novel, demonstrating how it is an existing term within the context. Nevertheless, it is relevant to consider that the importation of the term ‘queer’ into the Latin American context is one of appropriation and not of organic production, and which has later on been reformulated into other permutations such as *cuir* and *kuir*.⁴⁸⁹ On this topic, Martínez Expósito’s critiques the use of US theoretical models uncritically in Spanish-speaking contexts, and specifically Epps argues that the term ‘queer’ is complex and sometimes problematic, even within its Anglophone origins, as its historical use as a slur and later on reappropriation as an empowering label is specifically an Anglophone historicity.⁴⁹⁰ Hence, the term ‘queer’ in relation to its adoption in Spanish-speaking contexts is a contended topic and has raised concerns from different perspectives due to the term’s greatest resonance performing in the Anglophone world, where it evolved as a reclaimed slur.⁴⁹¹ Conversely, Facundo Saxe challenges the common criticism that the flow of ‘queer’ theory is unidirectionally ‘North-to-South.’⁴⁹² He argues that while ‘queer’ is indeed an imported concept, this does not equate to an uncritical adoption of the term. Saxe highlights that in various Latin American contexts, ‘queer,’ often adapted as ‘cuir’ or ‘kuir,’ constructs a unique form of sexual dissidence, distinct from its Anglophone conception.⁴⁹³ Thus, Saxe suggests that ‘queer’ operates as a dynamic system of sexual dissidence that evolves in a multidirectional and transnational

⁴⁸⁸ Paula Jiménez, in an interview to Gabriela Cabezón Cámara in ‘Página/12: Soy, “Cabecita loca”’ <<https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/soy/1-861-2009-07-10.html>> [accessed 29 September 2023].

⁴⁸⁹ For more on this discussion please see: Rubalcava, *Translating the Queer*, p. 174.

⁴⁹⁰ Alfredo Martínez Expósito, *Escrituras Torcidas: Ensayos de Crítica ‘Queer,’* Colección Rey de Bastos, 44 (Laertes, 2004), p. 23; Brad Epps, ‘Retos, Riesgos, Pautas y Promesas de la Teoría Queer,’ *Revista Iberoamericana*, 74.225 (2008), pp. 897–920 (901), doi:[10.5195/reviberoamer.2008.5216](https://doi.org/10.5195/reviberoamer.2008.5216).

⁴⁹¹ Brad Epps, ‘Retos, Riesgos, Pautas y Promesas de la Teoría Queer,’ *Revista Iberoamericana*, 74.225 (2008), pp. 897–920 (900), doi:[10.5195/reviberoamer.2008.5216](https://doi.org/10.5195/reviberoamer.2008.5216).

⁴⁹² Facundo Saxe, ‘Acerca del Término Queer y sus Derivas Latinoamericanas: Contra el Relato Norte-Sur y la Supuesta Importación Teórica,’ *Revista Belas Infiéis*, 11.2 (2022), pp. 1–17 (5).

⁴⁹³ Saxe, ‘Acerca del Término Queer,’ p. 5.

manner.⁴⁹⁴ This suggests that, for instance, the use of the word ‘queer’ in the novel is not as directly mappable as it may suggest at first glance.

The scholarly discussion has also observed not only the directionality of the term but its specific use within the Latin American context. Regarding the spheres in which it is used, Epps posits that the term is mainly foreign to non-Anglophone settings and is predominantly found within academic or theoretical discourses.⁴⁹⁵ His critique of the uncritical dissemination of queer, particularly when stripped of its local and historical grounding, extends beyond linguistic concerns. Instead, it reflects a deeper engagement with the complexities inherent in global cultural exchanges. Referencing Néstor Perlongher’s work, Epps highlights that “[l]os nombres ... en uso” son señas de pasaje, antes que bautismos ontológicos,’ meaning that the names/terms in use are not definitive or fixed identities but are instead ‘markers of passage.’⁴⁹⁶ These markers signify transitions, adaptations, and the shifting nature of identity within social and cultural contexts rather than serving as rigid labels that capture an immutable essence, or in Perlongher’s words, they do not operate as an ‘ontological baptism.’⁴⁹⁷ Contrary to the argument that the term queer has been appropriated in the Latin American context in a flattening way, Saxe argues that ‘queer’ in Latin America is employed in diverse and often contentious ways, bridging academic, theoretical, and activist realms.⁴⁹⁸ In some instances, the version of ‘queer’ legitimised in the hegemonic Anglophone sphere is adapted but not fully comprehended within Spanish-speaking contexts due to the imported nature of the words, i.e., it does not have the history of oppression and reappropriation that the word has in the Anglophone sphere.⁴⁹⁹ However, this discussion is not without a complex understanding of global power dynamics. In this case, Saxe further acknowledges the hierarchical power dynamics inherent in the adoption

⁴⁹⁴ Saxe, ‘Acerca del Término Queer,’ pp. 5-6.

⁴⁹⁵ Epps, ‘Retos, Riesgos, Pautas y Promesas,’ p. 899.

⁴⁹⁶ Néstor Perlongher, *Prosa Plebeya: Ensayos, 1980-1992* (Ediciones Colihue SRL, 1997), p. 47; Epps, ‘Retos, Riesgos, Pautas y Promesas,’ p. 912.

⁴⁹⁷ Perlongher, *Prosa Plebeya*, p. 47; Epps, ‘Retos, Riesgos, Pautas y Promesas,’ p. 912.

⁴⁹⁸ Saxe, ‘Acerca del Término Queer,’ p. 6.

⁴⁹⁹ Saxe, ‘Acerca del Término Queer,’ p. 6.

of terms from Northern knowledge production within Latin America, critiquing the conflation of academia and activism within Latin American queer discourse.⁵⁰⁰ Though, to this, he proposes that ‘queer’ functions as a cultural intervention tool at this intersection, ultimately emphasising the heterogeneous and multifaceted nature of ‘queer’ in Spanish-speaking contexts, noting that ‘queer’ may approximate the translation of the American concept from the 1990s, and, simultaneously transform it into something unique and untranslatable, generating knowledge that is self-defined and territorially specific, such as *cuir* and *kuir*.⁵⁰¹

The essence of the term queer, originating from a specific cultural and historical context, exemplifies how sexualities and identities are rooted in particular cultural spheres. Similarly, other sexualities and identities that do not arise solely in opposition to normative structures function in culturally distinct ways. While often embedded in local frameworks, these identities engage in a dynamic process of transnational interaction that enables them to permeate, influence, and be influenced by other culturally constructed sexual identities. In this sense, while locally situated, such terminologies are subject to external interactions and translations, allowing for adaptation, reshaping, and informing one another in a complex interplay, as seen in the historical linguistic migration of ‘queer.’ This cross-cultural permeability underscores both the flexibility and the resilience of local sexual identities when faced with external, imported concepts. Nevertheless, many of these identities should be approached and understood as cultural formulations specific to their sociocultural landscape. For example, the array of sexual identities found within the Latin American context is not directly translatable or ‘mappable’ to the Anglophone framework. Instead, they may be adapted or conceptually translated to foster understanding. To illustrate, Peter Fry highlights the rich and complex spectrum of sexual identities in Brazil:

Así, nuestra plétora infinitamente rica de identidades sexuales, nuestros hombres, mujeres, bichas, michês, viados, travestis, sapatões, monas, ades, monocos, saboeiras y otros, no son simples

⁵⁰⁰ Saxe, ‘Acerca del Término Queer,’ p. 6.

⁵⁰¹ Saxe, ‘Acerca del Término Queer,’ p.13.

traducciones de los homosexuales, heterosexuales y bisexuales que habitan en las tierras anglosajonas. Son personajes de un escenario de significaciones que tiene su historia y su lógica propias.⁵⁰²

Aligning with the concept of identity-mapping in Brazil, Néstor Perlongher's study applies this framework to Argentina, focusing specifically on masculine prostitution, here relevant to approach but not directly correlate to Cleopatra's case in Argentina. Perlongher identifies a range of terms, identities, and subjectivities across different regions, showcasing the nuanced similarities and differences. For example, on an international scale, he references *taxiboys* in Buenos Aires, *chaperos* in Madrid, *hustlers* in North America, and *michés* in Brazil.⁵⁰³ To further illustrate, Perlongher introduces the concept of *viril* (virile/manly) prostitution to distinguish the services provided by *michés*, who emphasise hyper-masculine performances, from other forms of homosexual prostitution, such as those involving *travestis*.⁵⁰⁴ This distinction is particularly relevant to this study, given Cleopatra's identity as a *travesti*: a performer of femininity whose portrayal often intersects with fetishisation, especially within the realm of sex work.⁵⁰⁵ Furthermore, in the context of Buenos Aires, power dynamics between actors along the gender spectrum are evident in discriminatory treatment and not only through different linguistic denominators. These dynamics construct a social structure where the feminine is more oppressed than the masculine, even within the sphere of sex work. *Travesti* prostitution, characterised by its feminine representation, faces greater marginalisation compared to *viril* prostitution, reinforcing the prevailing cis-patriarchal framework, which is further evidenced by Bruckner and Finkielkraut's note that regardless of role within the client-sex worker relation, those who are 'penetrated' are the

⁵⁰² Peter Fry, 'Prefacio,' in *El Negocio Del Deseo: La Prostitución Masculina En San Pablo*, by Néstor Perlongher (Paidós, 1999), pp. 13–16 (12-14). My translation: 'Thus, our infinitely rich plethora of sexual identities, our men, women, *bichas*, *michês*, *viados*, *s*, *sapatões*, *monas*, *ades*, *monocos*, *saboeiras*, and others, are not mere translations of the homosexuals, heterosexuals, and bisexuals who inhabit Anglophone lands. They are characters within a landscape of meanings with their own history and unique logic.'

⁵⁰³ Néstor Perlongher, *La prostitución masculina* (Urraca, 1993), p. 5.

⁵⁰⁴ Perlongher, *La prostitución masculina*, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰⁵ Perlongher, *La prostitución masculina*, p. 10.

ones with greater abjection.⁵⁰⁶ As such it is not the prostitution of a body at the centre issue of the sociologic discourse but the roles adopted within the sexual exchange that highlight the patriarchal discourse.

Considering intersectional signifiers like race and class, particularly alongside sex, gender, and sexual diversity, is essential for translation. This is especially evident when examining the use of the word *negro* in Argentina as evidenced in the novel; within its everyday use, the term is decontextualised from its original formulation and presents a particular challenge to the translator, which will be analysed in this section. Much like the everyday Argentine use of *negro*, which, despite in some cases being re-signified, still engages with discriminatory racial power dynamics, the term ‘queer’ presents unique challenges in Spanish-speaking contexts. It serves as a great example of linguistic proximity with no direct correlation, a phenomenon that reveals these terms as floating signifiers, as coined by Jacques Lacan and later expanded by Claude Lévi-Strauss, among others, and which designates a term without a fixed meaning that can encompass multiple interpretations.⁵⁰⁷ In this case, both *negro* and queer resist migration across languages, as they mark identities and experiences that are fluid and non-mappable unto a ‘target’ word. Translations grapple with the word’s status as floating signifiers that carry excess meaning and, due to their nature as unstable and broad, the translator engages in acts of signification that are complex and culturally involved.

The floating signifier serves a dual purpose: it reveals and bridges the gap between the signifier and the signified.⁵⁰⁸ Stuart Hall further develops this concept by examining race as a floating signifier to illustrate how racialised behaviours and perceived differences arise from discourse rather than biology or genetics.⁵⁰⁹ Furthermore, it is in this study that Hall

⁵⁰⁶ Perlongher, *La prostitución masculina*, pp. 10-1; Quote from: Pascal Bruckner and Alain Finkielkraut, *El Nuevo Desorden Amoroso*, trans. by J. Jordá (Editorial Anagrama S.A., 1979).

⁵⁰⁷ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*, trans. by Felicity Baker (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 55.

⁵⁰⁸ Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*, p. 55.

⁵⁰⁹ Stuart Hall, *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, ed. by Paul Gilroy and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Stuart Hall: Selected Writings* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), p. 361.

emphasises that societal classification systems revolve around these floating signifiers, profoundly shaping our perceptions of difference.⁵¹⁰ Thus, this concept is particularly relevant when applied to ‘queer’ identity, which notes that queerness is not anchored in any stable reality or inherent truth, but instead, it notes its only characteristic as a form of identity defined by its opposition to normative constructs. In other words, queer identity operates as a floating signifier, representing an identity without essence, its meaning shaped by a resistance to and critique of established norms. Ultimately, this thesis approaches ‘queer’ precisely as a floating signifier on top of the LGBTQ+ umbrella. Despite criticisms regarding the power dynamics among ‘queer,’ ‘gay,’ and ‘lesbian,’ the term ‘queer’ continues to serve as a transformative framework for examining the social power dynamics of identity. However, as scholars have noted, it is increasingly subject to normalisation and commodification within the neoliberal and capitalist spheres, and, as such, its impact will eventually be lessened and the need for a different terminology to identify non-normative radical and destabilising identities will likely surface.⁵¹¹ For this analysis, it provides an effective lens for discussing specific intersectionalities that challenge normative discourses within the novel, serving as a dual reference device. It can point to the distinct representation and ontology of the characters while also addressing the disruption of normative power dynamics through the narrator’s voice and authority.

In specific relation to *La Virgen Cabeza*, Cabezón Cámara’s work constructs a world where identities, alienated and deconstructed, thrive beyond the constraints of heteronormativity. This approach aligns with the disruptive nature of queer social practices, including sex and theory as articulated by Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, who emphasise the dismantling of norms that uphold heterosexual privilege and reinforce hierarchies rooted in property and propriety, structures they identify as heteronormative.⁵¹²

⁵¹⁰ Hall, *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, p. 359.

⁵¹¹ For more on the exploration of ‘queer,’ its subversiveness counterbalanced with its rapidly commodification see: Brad Epps, ‘Los “Fráxitos” de la Disidencia Sexual en la Época de la Globalización Neoliberal,’ *Mora*, 24, 2018, pp. 143–52, doi:[10.34096/mora.n24.6310](https://doi.org/10.34096/mora.n24.6310).

⁵¹² Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, ‘Sex in Public,’ *Critical Inquiry*, 24.2 (1998), 547–66 (p. 548) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1344178>> [accessed 10 April 2024].

Cabezón Cámara's narrative approach embodies this subversive ethos, challenging conventional understandings of identity and dominant social constructs. Her storytelling engages proactively in worldmaking by creating an alternative space in which marginalised identities are represented and reimagined in transformative ways. This approach ultimately advocates for a broader and more inclusive understanding of community and belonging. Guadalupe Maradei's observation that Cabezón Cámara's works are discursive rather than historiographic reproductions and that her endings are 'happy yet impossible' further underscores this idea.⁵¹³ Gil has also recorded this phenomenon as 'unrealities,' where the divergent identities can rejoice and sublimate some of these power dynamics which oppress them.⁵¹⁴ These endings not only highlight the fictional nature of these worlds but also provide a form of escapism and inspiration for real-world change. Although these narratives are rooted in reflections on contemporary and historical Argentine realities, they remain intentionally illusory. By constructing these alternate realities, Cabezón Cámara challenges societal norms and invites readers to envision a space where marginalised identities can celebrate and momentarily transcend the power dynamics that subjugate them.

This illusory world serves as both a critique and a vision of hope, an imagined reality in which the constraints of cis-heteronormative frameworks are disrupted. This is also not only limited to *La Virgen Cabeza*, as Cabezón Cámara's broader body of work consistently underscores her commitment to creating narratives that disrupt conventional forms, often featuring protagonists and communities that live on the margins, whether through gender, class, or socio-political realities, emphasising the intersectionality of oppression. In novels such as *Las Aventuras de la China Iron*, she continues this trend, blending historical and queer narratives to carve out spaces for alternative expressions of identity.⁵¹⁵ These texts are not just stories; they are vehicles for speculative reimagination that question the boundaries of identity and power, insisting on the potential for narratives to create spaces where

⁵¹³ Guadalupe Maradei, 'Ficciones posdictadura: la trilogía oscura de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' in *Eventos del deseo*, ed. by Dieter Ingenschay (Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2018), pp. 123–40 (139), doi:[10.31819/9783954876921-009](https://doi.org/10.31819/9783954876921-009).

⁵¹⁴ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 14.

⁵¹⁵ Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, *Las Aventuras de China Iron* (Random House, 2019).

marginalised voices are amplified and validated. Here, the stakes for feminist and queer translation become especially relevant. When these narratives migrate into a new linguistic and cultural contexts, they risk being flattened into recognisable categories in the target culture that affect their ontology, while also opening a space for translation itself to act as a queer practice. By foregrounding cultural specificity, such as for example importing the term *travesti*, translation can resist assimilationist readings. In this way, translation extends Cabezón Cámara's project since actively participates in creating transnational spaces where marginalised identities can be reimagined and empowered. The 'unrealities' of these works become critical grounds for feminist and queer translation to perform disruptive work, unsettling normative power dynamics in the target culture and sustaining radical plurality. In other words, the radical portrayals of Cabezón Cámara present a unique challenge in their migration to the US, precisely because of the cultural specificity embedded in the texts. Yet this challenge also creates the possibility for translation to enact subversion by foregrounding marginalised identities and their empowerment in a context where certain identities resist mapping, and where forms of marginalisation operate in similar ways technically (through institutional oppression for example) yet markedly distinct (through their historical specificity, as seen with the *villa miserias*).

Narrative Power-Dynamics

In *La Virgen Cabeza*, the portrayal of the subaltern is multifaceted, intertwining sexual dissent, gender, and social class, particularly embodied in the character of Cleopatra. José Javier Maristany emphasises how the marginal voice is appropriated and expressed through oral recording and transcription, processes that are central to the novel as Qüity, the main narrator, transcribes Cleopatra's recordings.⁵¹⁶ This act of transcription embodies a key narrative mechanism that situates Cleopatra's voice within a broader conversation about

⁵¹⁶ José Javier Maristany, 'Usos De La Voz Subalterna: Lesbianas Y Travestis En Dos Novelas Argentinas,' *Chasqui*, 45.1 (2016), 116–29 (p. 117) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24810881>> [accessed 2 August 2023].

agency and representation, and which parallels the more explicit criticism of *A Hora da Estrela* in the Rodrigo-Macabéa dyad and in *How to Be Both*'s George-Carol dyad. Hence, this section explores the intricate power dynamics and conflicts as Qüity and Cleopatra negotiate their authority over the narrative, in other words, the Qüity-Cleopatra dyad.

Michel Foucault's concept of power as a dynamic relation, exercised rather than possessed, is pertinent here.⁵¹⁷ Power, according to Foucault, operates as an ongoing, unstable interaction between individuals and societal structures, be they personal, social, or institutional.⁵¹⁸ This fluid conception of power is evident in the narrative's portrayal of interactions, reflecting continuous struggles for authority and voice. However, this dynamic relation is shown as non-monolithic due to Cleopatra's open undermining of Qüity's authority, as well as Qüity's commitment to sustain what José Javier Maristany refers to as the 'bivocal' nature of the narrative raises critical questions about how to articulate and legitimise the voices of the 'othered' within the dominant written culture.⁵¹⁹ This central tension speaks to the novel's broader conflict: whether it enables the subaltern subject to move beyond mere representation to become a politicised entity with literary and aesthetic agency capable of articulating their own experiences.⁵²⁰ In this sense, the power dynamic between Qüity and Cleopatra as narrators parallels Cleopatra's role as a community leader. She strives to unify El Poso and elevate its power, independence, and stability to a level comparable to that of the non-marginalised urban areas, creating a protected space with sufficient resources and a distinct way of life.

The 'bivocal' nature of the novel supports its exploration of the subaltern's articulation while also commenting on the dominant written culture due to the interplay of written and

⁵¹⁷ 'Method,' in Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge*, trans. by Robert Hurley, *The History of Sexuality* (Penguin, 2019), I, pp. 38–41 (38); also discussed in David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 16-17.

⁵¹⁸ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, pp. 16-17.

⁵¹⁹ Maristany, 'Usos De La Voz Subalterna,' p. 125.

⁵²⁰ Maristany, 'Usos De La Voz Subalterna,' p. 125.

transcript oral accounts. By including Cleopatra’s perspective, the novel creates space for her to critique and respond to how Qüity narrates their shared story, challenging the reliability of Qüity’s account and inviting readers to question the inherent power dynamics in storytelling. This interplay results in a more balanced portrayal of power between the two narrators, reflecting the broader struggle for voice and agency. Cleopatra’s direct contributions highlight her role as more than a subject of representation; she becomes an active participant, reinforcing her agency as both a leader within El Poso and a central figure in the narrative:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
[...] un poco contás las cosas como fueron y otro poco no sé qué hacés. Mi amor, ponés cualquier pelotudez, así que yo también voy a contar la historia nuestra. ⁵²¹	You tell some things like they happened and some of the other things, well, I don’t know what you do, my love, you say all kinds of stupid stuff. So I’m going to tell our story myself . ⁵²²

In this abstract, the transcription of Cleopatra’s narrative by Qüity reveals Cleopatra’s subversion of Qüity’s reliability as a narrator. Here, Cleopatra asserts her autonomy by sharing her story orally, allowing her perspective to dominate while also openly confronting Qüity’s account, which is said to miss important facts about the violence and oppression experienced by the community. In other words, Cleopatra’s oral contribution, while transcribed by Qüity, functions as a counter-narrative that reclaims her voice from potential erasure or misinterpretation, an act that underscores her resistance against dominant forms of representation. The translation amplifies this dynamic by altering Cleopatra’s tone. In the

⁵²¹ Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza* (Eterna Cadencia, Buenos Aires: 2009), p. 21.

⁵²² Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, translated by Frances Riddle (Charco Press, Edinburgh: 2017), p. 13.

source text, Cleopatra's line, 'así que yo también voy a contar la historia nuestra' (so I am going to tell our story too), maintains a collaborative quality, implying a shared effort in storytelling through the use of *también* (also). However, in Riddle's translation, the phrase, 'So I'm going to tell our story myself,' shifts to a more assertive, independent tone. This subtle change alters Cleopatra's relationship to Qüity's narrative. Rather than contributing an additional perspective that complements Qüity's, the translated version positions Cleopatra as challenging and replaces Qüity's account entirely. This shift has significant implications for readers' interpretation of the power balance between the narrators. Hence, while the source text supports a more cooperative dynamic where Cleopatra adds her voice alongside Qüity's, the translated version intensifies the conflict, reinforcing Cleopatra's defiance against Qüity's literary authority. The translation, therefore, presents a starker portrayal of the negotiation between hegemonic and non-hegemonic voices, underscoring Cleopatra's active resistance to being overwritten.

The mediation by literate narrators in *La Virgen Cabeza* mirrors the dynamics explored in *A Hora da Estrela*, where the intellectual narrator, Rodrigo, appropriates and controls the experiences of the marginalised, Macabéa, denying her space for self-articulation. This narrative approach in each novel underscores and comments on how even when narratives of marginalised voices are included, they often remain filtered through the lens of the hegemonic, literate figure, acting as a form of boundary or 'migration border' that limits the legitimacy and autonomy of those voices. This mediation highlights the inherent tension in representing subaltern experiences within a dominant literary framework, where the narrators' authority can obscure or alter the subaltern voices, as seen in its most extreme case in *A Hora da Estrela*. As Maristany notes, *La Virgen Cabeza*'s narrative technique becomes central for amplifying marginalised voices through recorded and transcribed testimony.⁵²³ By embedding Cleopatra's transcriptions into the narrative, Cabezón Cámara underscores the intricate relationship between oral and written traditions, positioning Cleopatra's voice, the voice of the subaltern, as central to the story's framework. Thus, a more dialogic relationship than those seen in *A Hora da Estrela* and *How to Be Both* is constructed, demonstrating a negotiated power dynamic where Qüity retains the literary authority but

⁵²³ Maristany, 'Usos De La Voz Subalterna,' p, 117.

also produces space for Cleopatra, allowing her, as the non-hegemonic figure, to influence the narrative with her voice. Then, Qüity, as the literate narrator, acts as both mediator and orchestrator, facilitating Cleopatra's voice while still maintaining her own literary control.

Qüity's dual role blurs the boundaries of narrative ownership, illustrating how power can be negotiated within hierarchies of literacy and authorship in which the subaltern is still negotiated within the narrative without complete autonomy. This dynamic recalls the structure in *How to Be Both*, where George remembers Carol and grapples with her identity after death, presenting a process of introjection that still positions the deceased Carol as subject to George's recollection. However, unlike Carol, who cannot actively negotiate her representation, Cleopatra consistently challenges Qüity's authority, making her narrative more participatory and vocal. The trajectory across these works (*A Hora da Estrela*, *How to Be Both*, and *La Virgen Cabeza*) highlights an evolving spectrum of narrative power. In *A Hora da Estrela*, the narrator, Rodrigo, imposes his authority on Macabéa, exploiting her story until her demise underscores the impossibility of her self-representation, obliterating both narrator and character. In *How to Be Both*, George attempts to reconcile with her mother's non-conforming identity, but Carol's death precludes her from directly influencing her portrayal. Conversely, *La Virgen Cabeza* offers a more ethically nuanced portrayal where, despite Qüity's journalistic framing, an implicit nod to the potentially exploitative nature of journalism, Cleopatra's active voice underscores ongoing power negotiations. This depiction critiques traditional power imbalances while proposing a space for the subaltern to engage in self-articulation within the constraints of literary mediation.

The struggle for narratorial authority between Qüity and Cleopatra is not only evident in the thematic content but is also deeply embedded in their linguistic expressions. An aspect of this distinction is how language operates as a marker and destabiliser of identity and power. Both the source text by Cabezón Cámara and Riddle's translation capture these nuances, as shown in the following excerpt:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
-------------------------	----------------

[...] vociferaba parte en rioplatense orillero, parte en español cervantino [...] ⁵²⁴	[...] she spoke a mix of lower-class River Plate dialect and proper Cervantes Spanish [...] ⁵²⁵
--	--

In this segment, Qüity describes Cleopatra’s use of language when recounting miracles told by the Virgin Mary as a blend of colloquial River Plate dialect (*rioplatense orillero*) and the Spanish associated with Cervantes, characterised in the translation as ‘proper.’ This unusual blending of linguistic varieties sets Cleopatra apart from the other inhabitants of El Poso, marking her with a distinctive voice. Emi Freirichs observes in the novel how Cleopatra’s speech operates through the effects of *trasheo*; following Cecilia Palmeiro’s definition and which linguistically merges the English word ‘trash’ with the Spanish verbal suffix *-eo*, which typically denotes an action or process. The construction of *trasheo* transforms the noun ‘trash’ into an active, dynamic process, signifying the act of taking elements of ‘high culture’ and political discourse and ‘trash’ them, or subvert their perceived hierarchical position so as to level them with concepts and mannerisms of ‘low culture,’ reworking this combination into something meaningful and subversive.⁵²⁶ This linguistic formation reflects the broader cultural practices of appropriation and re-signification within marginalised communities, particularly the community in the novel. In Cleopatra’s case, *trasheo* specifically becomes a performative act of resistance, by blending high cultural elements,

⁵²⁴ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 88.

⁵²⁵ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 78.

⁵²⁶ The use of terms like ‘high culture’ and ‘low culture’ in this analysis does not imply an inherent hierarchy of value or quality. These terms are employed to reflect the socio-cultural dynamics that establish and maintain normative and protective hierarchies within specific contexts. They are indicative of systems of power and exclusion that privilege certain cultural forms while marginalising others. This distinction is not intended to reinforce notions of superiority or inferiority but to engage critically with the ways these categories are constructed and perpetuated in cultural discourse. Emi Freirichs, ‘Towards a Travesti Subjectivity and System of Aesthetics: *Trasheo* Travesti, Irreverence, and Bold Visions for a New Humanity in Argentinean Literature and Culture,’ *Chasqui*, 51.1 (2022), 303–23 (p. 313) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27223727>> [accessed 2 August 2023]; Cecilia Palmeiro, *Desbunde y felicidad: de la Cartonera a Perlongher* (Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Título, 2011), p. 26.

such as the formal Spanish associated with Cervantes, and political discourse with colloquial, even vulgar, expressions, where she subverts established hierarchies of language and meaning. Her speech transforms language into a tool for challenging norms and asserting a multifaceted identity that resists marginalisation. This act of reworking and reclaiming linguistic forms also mirrors the community's broader defiance of societal expectations.

This hybridity raises questions about the origins and implications of Cleopatra's speech. One interpretation suggests that her connection with the Virgin Mary might be genuine, with the miraculous nature of this relationship manifesting in her unique linguistic style. In this reading, her blend of formal and colloquial language could be seen as divinely inspired. Alternatively, Cleopatra's linguistic flexibility might stem from her early education under a priest, which potentially exposed her to Cervantes' style of Spanish. This background would explain her ability to navigate seamlessly between formal and colloquial registers, enriching her speech with a complexity that fascinates Qüity. These interpretations highlight the ambiguity of Cleopatra's portrayal, positioning her speech as a significant narrative tool. It encapsulates her resistance, her connection to the divine, and her unique role within the community, making her a figure who defies easy definition.

The translation effects in *Slum Virgin* reveal Riddle's efforts to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps between the source text and its new audience. One notable example is her decision to render 'rioplatense orillero' and 'español cervantino' as 'lower-class River Plate dialect' and 'proper Cervantes Spanish.' In the source text, 'rioplatense orillero' refers to the colloquial, informal speech typical of Buenos Aires' marginalised communities, while 'español cervantino' refers to a formal, classical register associated with Spain's Golden Age literature, exemplified by Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. By using descriptors such as 'lower-class' and 'proper' to describe each register, the translation subtly contextualises Cleopatra's use of language as perceived by Qüity for an Anglophone audience, underscoring the contrast between these linguistic registers. This choice allows readers unfamiliar with the historical dynamics of Spanish to perceive her linguistic hybridity as both remarkable and complex. At the same time, the term 'proper' can also be understood as the colloquial slang operating as an intensifier. This additional semantic layer then offers a reading of 'proper Cervantes Spanish' as a reference to linguistic prestige and authority colloquially emphasised. This presents a unique opportunity to portray Cleopatra's hybridity, as the coexistence of high and low registers are afforded playfully within the sign. With regards to

the cultural dimension, the term ‘proper’ reflects the cultural and historical hegemony held by the Spanish from Spain, particularly Castilian, when compared to other forms of Spanish and regional dialects, often associated with marginalised groups, such as *rioplatense orillero*. This distinction emphasises Cleopatra’s position as a character who bridges disparate worlds and embodies contradictions, contributing to her mystique and subversive force in the narrative. Through this linguistic framing, Riddle’s translation reproduces the power dynamics of the source text, illustrating Qüity’s framing of linguistic power dynamics when describing Cleopatra’s speech as both a symbol of her unique identity and an assertion of agency within her community.

This linguistic amalgamation serves as a powerful symbol within the narrative’s exploration of identity and power dynamics, encouraging readers to consider the complex interplay of Cleopatra’s education, spirituality, and social background, and on a wider scope, the power dynamics between languages. Moreover, it renders Cleopatra ‘queer’ at a linguistic level: her speech challenges and subverts the hegemony of Castilian, historically upheld as the prestigious dialect in the Spanish-speaking world. Cleopatra even recounts with humour instances of the Virgin’s speech, which is characterised in the source text as Castilian:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
Como en español hablaba, parecía la reina Sofía, a mí me daba un poco de risa. ⁵²⁷	Since she was speaking so properly she sounded like Queen Sofía of Spain, and I thought it was funny. ⁵²⁸

⁵²⁷ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 25.

⁵²⁸ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 28.

In Cabezón Cámara's text, Cleopatra notes that the Virgin Mary 'en español hablaba' (spoke in Spanish), a phrase holding implications about linguistic and national identity. Riddle's translation renders this as 'speaking so properly,' emphasising the Virgin's formal, hegemonic language rather than preserving the specific term 'Spanish,' which Cleopatra distinguishes from her own Argentinian Spanish. By opting for 'speaking so properly' instead of 'speaking in Spanish,' the translation stresses the Virgin's refined tone but diminishes Cleopatra's implicit cultural distinction between her local language and the hegemonic Castilian Spanish. In this way, the translator complements the reading for the audience, assuming their lack of knowledge and interest in the linguistic politics implicit in the remark, obscuring this relevant topic of contention. This shift downplays the underlying power dynamics and the postcolonial context in which Cleopatra's language, shaped by her Argentinian context, stands apart from the traditional authority associated with Spain's 'proper' Spanish. Cleopatra's remark is also here to be understood as a double-layered joke about linguistic hierarchies and potentially Queen Sofia's specific use of the language. On one level, ironically framing Castilian Spanish as 'proper', and on another level, the humour is directed to emeritus Queen Sofia of Spain's Spanish language skills, which have frequently been critiqued as below expected standards.⁵²⁹ Additionally, Cleopatra's remark, 'me daba un poco la risa' (I thought it was funny), in the source text offers a sense of subtle ridicule toward the Virgin's dignified Spanish, a tone that suggests Cleopatra sees this formal Spanish as amusingly out of place in her context. In the translation, however, this line is negotiated, focusing on the humour rather than the irony or linguistic distance between the characters by specifying 'proper,' and therefore, it does not 'other' Castilian Spanish. This translation choice softens Cleopatra's linguistic difference, framing her reaction as light-hearted humour rooted in register difference instead of a tongue difference.

⁵²⁹ Journalist and author Pilar Eyre explains that Sofia's first languages were German and English, and she later learned Greek before eventually acquiring Spanish. However, her proficiency in Spanish reportedly declined over time due to her lack of practice of Spanish because of her social isolation from Spanish-speaking circles, as she instead focused on international spheres. For more on this please see: Pilar Eyre, Pilar Eyre: 'La reina Sofia parla tan malament castellà perquè no el parla amb ningú' - Tot es mou, 2024 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2z2iPtosz-M>> [accessed 7 November 2024];.

While this version may enhance readability for an Anglophone audience unfamiliar with Argentina's postcolonial linguistic landscape, it subtly alters the politics of Cleopatra's statement. The translation reorients the Virgin's speech as 'proper' language, which implicitly suggests a hierarchy, rather than an ironic juxtaposition with Cleopatra's vernacular. By opting for a simplified approach, the translation addresses Cleopatra's encounter with privilege yet omits the layered critique of linguistic dominance and regional identity in the source text. Cleopatra's remark, when translated in this manner, thus misses an opportunity to fully convey her irreverent response to the Virgin's speech and, by extension, to the hegemony of Castilian Spanish itself. This translational choice highlights the complex balancing act between making cultural references accessible to a new audience while preserving the source's subtle critiques of language and identity. Carla Amorós-Negre and Miguel Ángel Quesada Pacheco, drawing on findings from the LIAS project (*Linguistic Identity and Attitudes in Spanish-Speaking Latin America*) by Ana Beatriz Chiquito and Miguel Ángel Quesada Pacheco, reveal that attitudes toward Argentinian Spanish are notably negative across other Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America, with it being often perceived as one of the 'most incorrect' forms of Spanish, alongside Mexico's. In contrast, Castilian Spanish from Spain is consistently regarded as the 'most correct' by Latin American respondents.⁵³⁰ This perception underscores a significant power dynamic, reflecting Latin American attitudes that place Argentinian Spanish in lower regard compared to the hegemonic standard of Spanish from Spain (Castellano) and highlighting the complex sociocultural hierarchies embedded within linguistic perceptions across the Spanish-speaking world. Hence, Cleopatra's irreverence towards Castilian Spanish operates as a subversion of this established dynamic which does appear in both texts to different intensities, and, in the translation, it does not offer the cultural division that the source text

⁵³⁰ Miguel Ángel Quesada-Pacheco and Carla Amorós Negre, 'Percepción lingüística y pluricentrismo: Análisis del binomio a la luz de los resultados del Proyecto Linguistic Identity and Attitudes in Spanish-speaking Latin America (LIAS),' *Estudios de Lingüística. Universidad de Alicante (ELUA)*, 33 (2019), pp. 9–26 (17), doi:[10.14198/ELUA2019.33.1](https://doi.org/10.14198/ELUA2019.33.1); with reference to Ana Beatriz Chiquito and Miguel Ángel Quesada Pacheco (eds), *Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies*, 5 (2014), doi:[10.15845/bells.v5i0.667](https://doi.org/10.15845/bells.v5i0.667).

portrays by specifying ‘español,’ so as to imply that Cleopatra does not perceive her own language as explicitly ‘Spanish.’

Continuing with Cleopatra’s unique use of language, another instance in the text highlights how the translation’s simplification to secure accessibility, affects the portrayal of her linguistic identity. In this case, Cleopatra employs a distinct register that underscores her identity by emphasising her accent and the vocabulary gap between her and Qüity, subtly reflecting their differing educational backgrounds. Here, the translator faces the challenge of conveying the words themselves and the nuances of accent and pronunciation, which hold particular significance in maintaining the source’s wordplay. This choice impacts how Cleopatra’s identity is perceived, as the linguistic distinctions delineate social and educational differences:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
Ay, querida, ¿incecto decís como el Carlos que se cogía a la hija y la dejó embarazada el hijo de puta y le dimos la paliza de su vida pero la pendeja ya estaba recogida y reembarazada igual?, “Sí, Cleo, incesto o mejor como lo decís vos: era una cucaracha ⁵³¹	Oh, darling, you mean incest like the cockroach Carlos who fucked his daughter and left her pregnant and we gave him the beating of a lifetime but the child was already properly screwed up and properly pregnant anyway? ‘Yes, Cleo, incest, or like you say: he’s a cockroach ⁵³²

In this abstract, Cleopatra’s accent is highlighted through her pronunciation of the word ‘incecto,’ a play on the similarity in sound between *insecto* (insect) and *incesto* (incest). This relates to the ‘seseo’ phenomenon in Argentine Spanish, particularly in the Río de la Plata

⁵³¹Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 10.

⁵³²Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 2.

region, where Cleopatra's accent is situated. In Castilian Spanish, the letter 'c' before an 'e' or 'i' is pronounced as a voiceless dental fricative /θ/, as in *incesto* ([in'θes.to]). In Argentine Spanish, this sound is replaced by a voiceless alveolar sibilant /s/, so *incesto* is pronounced as [in'ses.to] rather than [in'θes.to], making *incesto* and *insecto* sound similar, as *insecto* is pronounced [in'sek.to]. A comparable phenomenon happens with the previously mentioned play with *El Poso* as a name, which can be pronounced as [po.so] (Poso) referring to sediment or residue or [po.θo] (Pozo) referring to a well or pit depending on whether the speaker uses *seseo* or *ceceo*. This wordplay in the segment is essential, underscored by Qüity's sarcasm and subtle linguistic discrimination, suggesting that Cleopatra intended to say 'insect' or that Qüity is mocking Cleopatra's pronunciation. In the source text, Cleopatra is portrayed as highly likely to know the word 'incest' and pronounce it as 'insect,' leading Qüity to ridicule her accent. In contrast, the translation assumes Cleopatra's knowledge of the word 'incest' and she herself introduces the word 'cockroach' to approximate the source's wordplay, though with less precision. By having Cleopatra introduce the term first, the translation softens Qüity's mockery, as Cleopatra engages in the humour, thereby shifting the power dynamic to a more balanced level. Examining the intricate interplay of narrative power and linguistic representation in both the source text and its translation in the overall novel, it reveals a shift in Cleopatra's portrayal; in the translation, she is depicted as more assertive and willing to engage in conflict, as seen in this section's analysis. Although this effect negotiates further agency on Cleopatra's side, both texts ultimately maintain the tensions between both narrators, preserving the core of the novel's power dynamics.

Mother and Family Units

Following an analysis of identity and the negotiation in the narrative power dynamics between both narrators, the following analysis will expand onto the relational labels that frame some of the narrator's relationships, with a specific focus on the novel's family structures as spaces of plastic resignification. In *La Virgen Cabeza*, the portrayal of motherhood takes centre stage through the characters of Qüity and Cleopatra. Qüity, in particular, develops two relational bonds: one is with María Cleopatra, who she gives birth to, and the other is Kevin, a boy from El Poso with whom she establishes a mother-son relationship. Thus, Kevin is understood as an adopted son, and María Cleopatra is Qüity and

Cleopatra's biological daughter. The relational formulation between Qüity, Cleopatra, and their daughter are described by Cabezón Cámara, who states in an interview:

‘LVC termina medio chistosamente; luego de construir otra forma de femineidad y de vínculo en todo el libro, al final vuelven los estereotipos, o eso dice una de las narradoras, Qüity, y sale corriendo tras Cleo, la travesti que fue padre biológico y es madre practicante (en el sentido del estereotipo, la que cocina, elige la ropa, etc). Qüity también era madre de la niña, pero de un modo más distante. Y cuando se entera de que Cleo se va, sale a buscarla para evitar ser cristalizada ahí, en el lugar de madre abandonada con una niña.’⁵³³

As the author explains, Cleopatra's relationship with María Cleopatra is established as that of her biological father and practising mother. It is also heavily characterised by a stereotypical sense of motherhood, including responsibilities such as housekeeping, childcare, and clothing purchases.

As noted by Silvina Sánchez, Cleopatra offers two distinct discourses in relation to motherhood, one in which she reconstructs her own image of motherhood on herself and another in which she evaluates Qüity's motherhood.⁵³⁴ She most particularly reproduces cultural conceptions of motherhood that are widespread in the context, in two relevant

⁵³³ My translation: *Slum Virgin* ends somewhat amusingly; after constructing another form of femininity and relationship throughout the book, in the end, the stereotypes return, or so says one of the narrators, Qüity. She runs after Cleo, the *travesti* who was the biological father and is the practising mother (in the stereotypical sense: the one who cooks, chooses the clothes, etc.). Qüity was also the girl's mother but in a more distant way. And when she finds out that Cleo is leaving, she goes after her to avoid being crystallised there, in the role of the abandoned mother with a child; Nora Domínguez, ‘Conversaciones y reenvíos con Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,’ *Cuadernos LIRICO. Revista de la red interuniversitaria de estudios sobre las literaturas rioplatenses contemporáneas en Francia*, 10, 2014, 1–6 (p. 4) <<https://doi.org/10.4000/lirico.1653>>.

⁵³⁴ Silvina Sánchez, ‘La fuerza de juntarnos. La villa como fiesta queer en La Virgen Cabeza de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,’ *Caracol*, 25, 2023, pp. 414–45 (426), doi:[10.11606/issn.2317-9651.i25p414-445](https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2317-9651.i25p414-445).

senses, one to self-project in an idealised manner, and the other as a condemnatory jury.⁵³⁵ In this dialogic interaction, the novel illustrates how the symbolic order constructs representations, images, and figures that enforce specific discourses and practices surrounding motherhood.⁵³⁶ While in Miami, Cleopatra decisively expresses her belief that Qüity is not an adequate mother, stating, ‘you don’t pay any attention to her’ and ‘while you may be a disaster with little María Cleopatra, and honestly, I don’t know what that girl would do without me.’ Through these criticisms, Cleopatra perpetuates the societal condemnation of mothers perceived as inattentive or neglectful, framing motherhood as a quantifiable measure of dedication, governed by the symbolic order’s prescribed mandates and values.⁵³⁷ By doing so, Cleopatra positions herself as the self-sacrificing mother, fully committed to nurturing and focusing on her child, elevating her role in contrast to Qüity’s perceived shortcomings. This portrayal underscores the internalisation of societal ideals that prioritise abnegation and unwavering devotion in motherhood.⁵³⁸ This dynamic however is permuted in the translation of Cleopatra’s sense of motherhood:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
Afirmada en sus certezas teológicas y en su capacidad para concebir vínculos parentales , seguía [...] ⁵³⁹	Firm in her theological certainties and her genealogical connections , she continued [...] ⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁵ Sánchez, ‘La fuerza de juntarnos,’ p. 426.

⁵³⁶ Sánchez, ‘La fuerza de juntarnos,’ p. 426.

⁵³⁷ Sánchez, ‘La fuerza de juntarnos,’ p. 426.

⁵³⁸ Sánchez, ‘La fuerza de juntarnos,’ p. 426.

⁵³⁹ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 11.

⁵⁴⁰ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 3.

As seen in this extract, Cleopatra is portrayed linguistically as embodying a motherly role, in this example it is by linguistically defining her through her capacity to ‘concebir’ (to conceive), from the beginning of the novel. In here, the term in Spanish ‘parentales’ (parental) is translated as ‘genealogical,’ introducing an alliteration that adds flair and rhythm to the text, creating a playful echo with ‘theological.’ While this stylistic choice enhances the literary quality of the translation, it does not capture the source’s use of conception, which anchors Cleopatra in the sphere of biologically rooted motherhood. On a subtextual level, the use of ‘concebir’ linguistically aligns Cleopatra with the Virgin Mary, her guide and symbolic mother figure, who is also capable of conceiving in an unusual way. Similarly to the Virgin Mary’s miraculous conception, Cleopatra’s conception is portrayed as a linguistic miracle: she becomes a mother not through her uterus but her phallus, and with Qüity taking on the role of the birthing mother. This layered use of the verb ‘concebir’ subtly underscores its thematic relevance to the novel, intertwining notions of divine creation, subversion of biological norms, and the redefinition of parenthood.

Cleopatra ultimately acts as a focal point for subversion and fluidity, not only in her dual roles as both the biological father and enacting mother of María Cleopatra, when she subscribes to hegemonic pre-prescribed discourses of motherhood but also in how she navigates her relationship with Qüity. Cleopatra, as the character most emblematic of the abject space of El Poso, encapsulates its fluidity and potential for redefinition, an ontology that is extended to her relational identities. This is the case when, after the couple leaves El Poso following the siege, Qüity succumbs to depression while simultaneously mourning Kevin’s death and carrying María Cleopatra. In this vulnerable state, Cleopatra assumes both parental roles towards Qüity, functioning simultaneously as mother and father:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
-------------------------	----------------

[...] fue [Cleo] mi madre y fue mi padre proveedor ⁵⁴¹	She [Cleo] was my mother and my father and my provider ⁵⁴²
---	---

This passage depicts Qüity's reflections on Cleopatra's roles while on the island, as Cleopatra assumes multiple caregiving roles that reflect and sustain hegemonic discourses, by not openly challenging the traditional roles assigned to this (the mother is defined by providing emotionally, and the father materially); yet it does subvert their monolithic nature, as a person can be both, mother and father. In more detail, Qüity describes Cleopatra in the source text as both 'mi madre' (my mother) and 'mi padre proveedor' (my father provider), reinforcing a binary construct where motherhood is tied to emotional caregiving and fatherhood to material provision. In this depiction, Cleopatra fulfils both roles simultaneously, exemplifying traditional gendered expectations rather than undermining them, yet still upholding the chimeric fluidity depicted of her. The translated text, instead, introduces a notable shift, akin to a feminist translation approach, by redefining these roles. Riddle renders the passage as 'my mother, my father and my provider,' decoupling the concept of provision from fatherhood and creating a third distinct role. This translation reimagines Cleopatra's caregiving by separating the idea of the provider from the father's label, subtly reframing parenthood and caregiving as flexible, non-obligatory, and independent of traditional gendered associations. This option modulates Qüity's conventional social norms as depicted in the source text, adopting a more fluid understanding of these roles. In other words, by creating a distinct category for the provider, the translation challenges the inherent association of parenthood with biological ties or traditional gendered expectations.

Qüity, in contrast to Cleopatra who adheres to normative adscriptions of motherhood, acts as a destabiliser of traditional and formalised behaviours associated with motherhood within the symbolic order. In other words, she opens up a dialogue about the tension between

⁵⁴¹ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 14.

⁵⁴² Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 6.

the beliefs and constructed values surrounding motherhood, which function as normalising and disciplinary forces, and the lived experience of motherhood itself.⁵⁴³ As Sánchez notes, Qüity's dealignment with traditional values of motherhood, such as isolating herself, showing signs of depression, and neglecting her child, marks her departure from the actions prescribed to women for motherhood as their biological destiny and sole life purpose, challenging these preconceptions as self-evident.⁵⁴⁴ Thus, the novel presents motherhood not as a fixed biological role but as a fluid, contingent position, shaped by encounters, affections, and desires rather than predetermined by biology.⁵⁴⁵ This is further amplified by the abject space offered by El Poso, where family dynamics subvert the biological determinism of conventional family structures and family roles are portrayed as empty spaces, adaptable and redefined based on circumstances and relationships.⁵⁴⁶ Elective motherhoods emerge, such as Qüity's relationship with Kevin, where the child 'engenders' the mother by choosing her as his protector.⁵⁴⁷ In this case, the translation offers means to amplify and further establish Qüity's sense of motherhood towards Kevin:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
Había visto en las filmaciones ese cuerpito desordenado por la muerte [...] ⁵⁴⁸	I'd seen the footage of my little boy's body , distorted by death [...] ⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴³ Sánchez, 'La fuerza de juntarnos,' pp. 426-7.

⁵⁴⁴ Sánchez, 'La fuerza de juntarnos,' p. 427.

⁵⁴⁵ Sánchez, 'La fuerza de juntarnos,' p. 427.

⁵⁴⁶ Sánchez, 'La fuerza de juntarnos,' p. 427.

⁵⁴⁷ Sánchez, 'La fuerza de juntarnos,' p. 427.

⁵⁴⁸ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 12.

⁵⁴⁹ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 4.

In this segment, Qüity recounts seeing Kevin’s lifeless body through footage of the siege on El Poso. The source text describes Kevin as ‘ese cuerpito’ (‘that little body’), emphasising the fragility and vulnerability of his body, thereby heightening the tragedy and injustice of the scene. The diminutive ‘cuerpito’ evokes tenderness and sorrow, focusing on the physical smallness and innocence of the child. Conversely, the translation introduces ‘my little boy’s body,’ incorporating ‘my’ to assert a personal and possessive connection, forming a stronger sense of possessiveness. This choice intensifies Qüity’s emotional attachment and underscores her role as Kevin’s mother, foregrounding her grief as both intimate and deeply relational. While the source text focuses on the tragic vulnerability of Kevin, the translation shifts the emphasis toward Qüity’s maternal identity and the personal loss she endures, offering a slightly different lens through which the emotional weight of the scene is enhanced. The urgency with which Qüity goes to the scene, however, is further negotiated in translation:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
[...] me llevé por delante varios autos , el mío quedó todo abollado [...] ⁵⁵⁰	[...] there was a ton of traffic , my car was dented [...] ⁵⁵¹

In this segment, the novel depicts Qüity’s urgency in reaching El Poso after the siege. Here, the source text notes that Qüity ‘[se llevó] por delante varios autos’ (Qüity took out multiple vehicles), a phrase that demonstrates her aggressive driving, suggesting she knocked over, collided with, or destroyed multiple cars on her way to El Poso. This portrayal is reinforced by ‘el mío quedó todo abollado’ (mine was all dented), stressing that her car was significantly damaged due to her reckless driving. Together, these elements depict Qüity as frantic and dangerous to others in her urgency to reach her destination. Conversely, the translation

⁵⁵⁰ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 121.

⁵⁵¹ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 111.

significantly softens this depiction. By describing ‘a ton of traffic’ and noting that her car was dented without explicitly stating the cause, the translation masks Qüity’s aggression and the danger she posed to other drivers. While it suggests some damage with the word ‘dented,’ the lack of explicit action makes this detail appear incidental rather than a consequence of reckless behaviour under duress.

As analysed in this section, *La Virgen Cabeza* portrays complex interrelations between the narrators and children, insiders and outsiders of El Poso, and individuals situated at divergent margins of society, reformulating traditional bonds. On this topic, Silvina Sánchez observes that the novel destabilises hegemonic logic, which operates through dichotomous pairs, by undermining essentialist understandings of ‘man’ and ‘woman,’ ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity.’⁵⁵² In doing so, it subverts epistemological regimes and political binaries, questioning traditional familial relations, which, by extension, further challenges entrenched power structures.⁵⁵³ These relationships ultimately transcend normative frameworks, creating adaptive and subversive modes of connection, which find their subversiveness precisely in what Foucault problematises in the interview *Friendship as a Way of Life*. During this interview, Foucault describes how men historically have lacked access to emotional and physical intimacy with other men to the same extent as, for example, women have experienced with one another.⁵⁵⁴ Hence, he identifies that one of the most significant challenges to the heteropatriarchy and the relations embedded within the normative discourse lies in the subversive potential of homorelations.⁵⁵⁵ These relationships, he argues, destabilise dominant discourse of gender and power more fundamentally than isolated acts of sexuality.⁵⁵⁶ In *La Virgen Cabeza*, the relational dynamics within El Poso reproduce this destabilising dynamic, as connections move beyond sexuality into emotional and communal

⁵⁵² Sánchez, ‘La fuerza de juntarnos,’ p. 430.

⁵⁵³ Sánchez, ‘La fuerza de juntarnos,’ p. 430.

⁵⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, ‘Friendship As A Way Of Life,’ in *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1961-1984)*, by Michel Foucault, ed. by Sylvère Lotringer, trans. by John Johnson (Semiotext(e), 1996), pp. 308–12 (311).

⁵⁵⁵ Foucault, ‘Friendship As A Way Of Life,’ p. 309.

⁵⁵⁶ ‘Foucault, ‘Friendship As A Way Of Life.’

forms of subversion that challenge normative constraints and destabilise them by reconfiguring relational bonds. These relationships then become modes of resistance against hegemonic power structures. The translation preserves this resistance and enhances this subversive dimension, enabling both texts to function as affirmations of relational diversity and as provocation to reimagine the limits of kinship and community.

The Use and Translation of the Word *Negros*

The analysed linguistic interplay and subversion of *La Virgen Cabeza*, which has demonstrated Cabezón Cámara's destabilising of normative frameworks and reconfiguration of relational dynamics has been centred on power dynamics between the different characters within the novel and the linguistic power dynamics of the novel. The next two sections turn to culturally placed signifiers that offer unique challenges due to their deeply embedded social histories of race, gender, and marginalisation: *negro* and *travesti*. Both function as controversial terms due to their histories of harm while also, at times, reclaimed for resistance and resignification. The term *negro* (black) in *La Virgen Cabeza* holds significant social and linguistic weight within the Argentine context, reflecting complex intersections of race, class, and interpersonal relationships that challenge translation efforts, and which bring forth a relevant discussion on racialised language. In Argentina, *negro* does not only refer to individuals of African descent or those with dark skin; it is frequently used in a pejoratively to describe individuals from socioeconomically marginalised backgrounds or those associated with lower social status. Paradoxically, however, *negro* can also be used affectionately as a term of endearment for someone close, such as a friend, family member, or romantic partner. This triple connotation complicates the translation process, requiring linguistic adaptation to capture the multiplicity of the term, especially when used by characters to self-refer as such, and the underlying social stigmas it can convey. This complexity opens a broader discussion on the relevance of explicitly addressing such terms in translation, a common concern in Feminist Translation Studies: whether to reproduce the term in the translation to offer a source-culture-oriented translation or to consider adapting language to avoid reproducing oppressive aspects that carry discriminatory weight without

adding value to the text.⁵⁵⁷ This segment will observe the use and translation of the word *negro* in the novel to discuss the impact of the adaptive techniques implemented by the translator.

In the specific context of translating the word *negro* in *La Virgen Cabeza*, this discussion has been broached by Melina Balcázar when discussing its translation into French. Balcázar notes that the word *negro* in the novel, as well as in the Argentine context, is used negatively to refer to individuals with dark skin, even if they are not of African descent or Afro-Argentine.⁵⁵⁸ In her analysis, she reflects on how much the translator should adapt the term and whether the translation should consciously or unconsciously protect hegemonic sensibilities. Drawing on Jacques Derrida's ideas of the economy of violence, she argues that, translators should strive for 'minimal violence,' in other words, seeking to avoid what the approach considers the 'worst' form of violence: silence.⁵⁵⁹ In this framework, translating specific negative terms becomes a relevant tool for portraying and reflecting on the experiences of those marginalised within hegemonic power dynamics. In this sense, specific negative terms are translated to portray, migrate, and reflect on the experiences of those subordinate within the hegemonic power dynamics.

Alejandro Frigerio highlights that the term *negro* became more widely used after the 2001 economic crisis when the gap between middle and lower-income groups in Argentina became more pronounced.⁵⁶⁰ In this context, the collective term often refers to the popular

⁵⁵⁷ For example, Luise von Flotow discusses the option of the intervention of the translator to challenge and contextualise oppressive language; Flotow, 'Feminist Translation.'

⁵⁵⁸ Melina Balcázar, 'Traducir la violencia. La "ley de la mayoría" en la traducción al francés de *Las malas*, de Camila Sosa Villada, y *La virgen cabeza*, de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' *Mutatis Mutandis. Revista Latinoamericana de Traducción*, 16.1 (2023), 73–87 (p. 84) <<https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.mut/v16n1a05>>.

⁵⁵⁹ Balcázar, 'Traducir la violencia,' p. 85; Jacques Derrida, 'Violence et Métaphysique: Essai Sur La Pensée d'Emmanuel Levinas,' *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 69.3 (1964), 322–54 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40900827>> [accessed 10 April 2024].

⁵⁶⁰ Alejandro Frigerio, 'Luis D'Elia y los negros: identificaciones raciales y de clase en los sectores populares,' *Clarusculo. Revista del Centro de Estudios sobre Diversidad Cultural*, 8.8 (2009), 13–43 (p. 15) <<http://hdl.handle.net/2133/12016>> [accessed 10 April 2024].

or subaltern sectors of society and sometimes, more specifically, refers to individuals living in poverty.⁵⁶¹ Frigerio also notes that those who use this term tend to affirm that they detach it from its racial connotations, instead linking it to moral, intellectual, or aesthetic qualities, attempting to shift the focus from race to other attributes.⁵⁶² However, he argues that this displacement from its ethnic connection is related to the invisibility of Black people in Argentina and is a result of the dominant narrative of whitewashing the country's identity, which is reinforced in its everyday social interactions.⁵⁶³ This process of whitewash in which a sense of Argentina's identity is perceived majorly as 'white' is maintained through a social process that constructs and enforces racial categories in daily life, including the deliberate concealment of Black ancestry within families.⁵⁶⁴ This erasure is part of a broader shift in the discourse on social stratification, where distinctions based on race are often replaced by those based on class.⁵⁶⁵

The use of the word *negro* is prominent in *La Virgen Cabeza* and Riddle approached the translation with flexibility, in order to separately adapt each instance. For example, the characters from the slums are explicitly described as *negros* in the Argentine text but as 'dark-skinned' in the English translation, still emphasising their racial identity and conveying some of the broader spectrum to which the word refers:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
-------------------------	----------------

⁵⁶¹ Frigerio, 'Luis D'Elia y los negros,' p. 15; Frigerio notes on this when the use of the word is 'negros,' including the inverted commas: 'Luis D'Elia y los negros,' p. 20. He also notes in page 30 that Luis D'Elia notes on the use of 'negros,' without the inverted commas in this case to also designate the poor, so it appears that both versions exist and are in use.

⁵⁶² Frigerio, 'Luis D'Elia y los negros,' p. 15.

⁵⁶³ Frigerio, 'Luis D'Elia y los negros,' p. 21.

⁵⁶⁴ Frigerio, 'Luis D'Elia y los negros,' p. 21.

⁵⁶⁵ Frigerio, 'Luis D'Elia y los negros,' p. 21.

<p>Porque nos tiraban por eso, mi amor, por negros, por pobres, por putos, por machos,[...] ⁵⁶⁶</p>	<p>[...] why they'd always shot at us, my love: because we were dark-skinned, we were poor, we were fags or tough guys, [...] ⁵⁶⁷</p>
---	---

In this excerpt, Cleopatra uses the term *negros* alongside other identifiers, such as ‘pobres’ (poor), used to discriminate against the people of El Poso. Here, the translator can balance the translation, recognising that ‘negros,’ in this instance, designates ethnicity rather than other identity markers. This allows for ‘dark-skinned’ to capture the broader spectrum of skin tones that are ‘not white’ and therefore discriminated against since, as noted before, *negros* in the Argentine context can refer to a range of skin tones, not exclusively Black or Afro-descendant. Nevertheless, when the source text offers the word ‘negros’ without an explicit dictation on its reference to the signifier of the ethnic marker, the translated text most commonly leans toward emphasising poverty, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
<p>[...] ni a los negros les damos, tenemos que defenderlos de la Agencia. ⁵⁶⁸</p>	<p>[...] we don't even beat the poor anymore, we have to defend them from the Condors. ⁵⁶⁹</p>

In this segment, the translation favours interpreting the term ‘negros’ as ‘poor,’ emphasising socioeconomic status over racial connotations. This demonstrates how translation effects

⁵⁶⁶ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 91

⁵⁶⁷ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 81.

⁵⁶⁸ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 40.

⁵⁶⁹ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 32.

actively reshape the socio-political registers of a text, influencing how power dynamics and marginalised communities are perceived by a new audience. This choice underscores poverty as a central theme of the novel but risks overlooking or diminishing the characters' racial identities, potentially erasing significant aspects of their intersectional struggles. The erasure of racial dimensions alters the critical potential of the text, limiting its capacity to challenge hegemonic narratives of race and class. Such an approach raises critical questions about the erasure of racial dynamics in favour of socioeconomic narratives, especially given the broader context of Argentina's historical whitewashing of its national identity and the generalised use of *negros* to obscure racial distinctions. By not explicitly addressing these racial dimensions, the translation misses an opportunity to explore the intersectionality of race and class and to highlight the complex linguistic interplay of marginalisation in Argentina for an Anglophone audience. This omission reinforces the thesis argument that translation decisions are political acts that can either sustain or disrupt existing power structures. Further complicating the translation of the word *negro* is the challenge of conveying racialised language in English in a way that avoids reproducing harmful power dynamics while remaining sensitive to readers. A translation using 'black' would likely face significant backlash due to its racialised implications, and the cultural nuances of *negros* that refer to socioeconomic status in the Argentine context would be lost. This illustrates a broader tension in Translation Studies, the translator's dilemma between cultural proximity and audience reception, a tension that is embedded within system of power and ideology. A translation seeking to critique and inform on the contextual use of *negros* in Argentina would require more intrusive techniques, such as including explanatory footnotes or a preface, to further convey the layered meanings embedded in the term and bring attention to this practice. Still, due to the prominence and the readership's tendency to favour invisible translators that do not afford the visibility of the translator themselves or the text, this is an unlikely option for commercial literary translation.

An example of another term used in the translation that focuses on social class is seen in the following excerpts that intersect with broader political discourse regarding the poverty theme in the novel:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
-------------------------	----------------

[...] los santos negros [...] ⁵⁷⁰	[...] the shantytown saints [...] ⁵⁷¹
---	---

In these excerpts, the source text prominently features the term ‘negros,’ while the translation in this case opts for the word ‘shantytown.’ Due to the context in which this segment is provided, referring to the statues of religious figures in El Poso, the translated text highlights its location specificity by opting for ‘shantytown.’ This designates a destitute area situated on the periphery of a town, marked by makeshift and impoverished dwellings, highlighting the *villa miseria*. Nevertheless, while relevant in its platforming of the relevant signifier of the text, this option does overlook the racial tones that highlight the intersectional power dynamic, revealing the limitations of translating this specific word from its contextual placement into the target language. When approaching the word, the preference for a socio-economic term also aligns with the novel’s central theme of poverty. The community of El Poso undergoes a remarkable transformation guided by Cleopatra’s influence, evolving into a pisciculture settlement with Baroque-style elements of excess and pleasure. Here, the inhabitants sustain themselves through carp farming and navigate the intricate web of class-based power dynamics, seemingly thriving with abundant food and intimacy, amongst other indulgences in excess. Consequently, the translator’s discerning emphasis on the communal dimension, rather than the racial undertones of the term, seamlessly aligns with the novel’s central narrative arc that follows the story of El Poso’s community. Still, the effects of translating the word *negros* without underlining or highlighting its racial tones has an impact beyond the specific choice of leaning into the theme of poverty; it also has effects undermining the imagery of the novel, as evidenced in the following excerpt from the novel:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
-------------------------	----------------

⁵⁷⁰ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 87.

⁵⁷¹ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 77.

<p>[...] me acuerdo bien de la multitud de negritos con las manos brotadas de flores blancas.⁵⁷²</p>	<p>I clearly remember the crowd of little slum children with white flowers spilling from their hands.⁵⁷³</p>
--	--

In this evocative passage, the term ‘negritos’ assumes a central role, referring to children and can refer to both identifiers of impoverishment and blackness thus holding a pivotal place in the narrative’s thematic sphere. These children clutch white flowers, creating a striking visual contrast between their dark skin and the flowers’ brightness. The juxtaposition intensifies their innocence, symbolised by the white flowers, against the peril of their precarious task: selling these flowers to stationary vehicles at traffic lights. The term ‘negritos’ not only underscores the visual contrast but also deepens the imagery, highlighting the children’s vulnerability (in size) within a harsh reality shaped by capitalist forces and systemic inequalities that perpetuate their poverty.

In Riddle’s version, this segment undergoes a subtle negotiation. Rather than preserving the visual and racial interplay inherent in ‘negritos,’ the text translates it as ‘little slum children.’ This choice shifts the emphasis to a shared identity as part of the El Poso community, foregrounding socioeconomic markers and the diminutive connotation prevalent in the source text. However, it inadvertently sacrifices the literary exploration of colour contrast by removing racial undertones, diminishing the impact of the scene’s literary devices and a critical aspect of the intersectional societal commentary prominent in the narrative. The stark juxtaposition between the children’s skin and the flowers, alongside the vivid imagery of the street stained red with their blood after being struck by cars, loses much of its evocative power in translation. Ultimately, Riddle’s translation as a whole consistently employs a range of vocabulary to render the term *negro*, most notably stripping it of its racial connotations and instead emphasising socioeconomic and community identity. This approach is significant as it reveals the sensibilities of the US readership, highlighting how

⁵⁷² Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 29.

⁵⁷³ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 21.

translation choices reflect and respond to the cultural frameworks and political sensitivities of the target audience. By doing so, the translation avoids the racial tones that might be contentious in Anglophone contexts while highlighting the central themes of poverty and community.

From a Translation Studies perspective, this offers a valuable framework for understanding how cultural frameworks of the target audience influence translational practice. The downplaying of racial meaning reflects a negotiation with the expectations and sensitivities of the US readership, where racialised language carries a complex and highly charged history. In this way, the dual role of the translator is revealed: they are a cultural mediator and a negotiator of ethical engagement. Nevertheless, this erasure of racial implications comes at a cost. It diminishes the specificity of imagery focused on colour and the intersectionality inherent in the source text, which reflects the linguistic nuances of Argentinian society, the disproportionate racism affecting the community, and the non-white identity of the characters. In this way, the translation risks erasing portrayals of the racial violence in Argentina, reducing a complex discussion of racial and socioeconomic identity to its socioeconomic dimensions. This demonstrates a deliberate negotiation for the target sensibility, catering to an audience accustomed to literary translation that prioritises readability and cultural palatability. Such decisions expose a challenge to translation ethics: while there is potential to employ footnotes or preface to preserve cultural specificity, for example explaining the use of *negro* and denouncing its epistemic violence, Riddle's translation instead opts to subscribe the text into the target culture's hegemonic frameworks to not reproduce the linguistic epistemic violence. Therefore, this case demonstrates how the negotiation of translation can obscure racialised violence and reflect cultural priorities of the receiving context.

The Use and Translation of the Word *Travesti*

The term *travesti* presents a significant challenge for translation in a similar way to the term *negro* due to their cultural embeddedness and resistance to transferability into English. The term itself is regionally specific and generally refers to individuals who were assigned male at birth but identify with various expressions of femininity, regardless of whether they

undergo hormone therapy or surgical procedures.⁵⁷⁴ Moreover, it encompasses a political dimension that links with a general state of social vulnerability, sex work, lack of fundamental rights, and the recognition of identity as a political stance.⁵⁷⁵ In Argentina, the community faces pervasive violence, with the actual extent of victimisation obscured by the systematic erasure of their identities even in death, as noted by Melina Balcázar.⁵⁷⁶

On a dynamic level, Lohana Berkins states that the concept of disrupts the binary logic of Western hegemonic societies, which presses those who resist categorisation under ‘men’ or ‘women,’ making it a highly complex label to approach in translation.⁵⁷⁷ Precisely as Frerichs notes, attempts at translating into English are highly challenging due to the shortcomings of terminology available, such as ‘transvestite’ and ‘cross-dresser,’ which have their own histories within US trans* activism, whereas operates in its own way.⁵⁷⁸ Hence, the terminology is not exclusive from transgender identity but sets itself apart from the margins of the US and UK sociocultural considerations.⁵⁷⁹ In other words, as Emi Frerichs notes, cannot be described, translated or understood as anything other than .⁵⁸⁰ Consequently, when approaching the translation of this novel, it is crucial to understand the prevalent conformity to homogeneity in global circulation, which risks misrepresenting

⁵⁷⁴ Mauro Cabral (A.I. Grinspan) and Paula Viturro, ‘(Trans)Sexual Citizenship in Contemporary Argentina,’ in *Transgender Rights*, ed. by Paisley Currah, Richard M. Juang, and Shannon Minter (University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp. 262–73 (270).

⁵⁷⁵ Cabral and Viturro, ‘(Trans)Sexual Citizenship,’ p. 270.

⁵⁷⁶ Balcázar, ‘Traducir la violencia,’ p. 75. This information is accounted in her research by noting on the project: *El Observatorio de Personas Trans Asesinadas*, by the supporting network of Transgender Europe (TGEU), which provides statistic annual reports.

⁵⁷⁷ Lohana Berkins, ‘Panel Sexualidades Contemporáneas: “Travestis: Una Identidad Política”’ (presented at the VIII Jornadas Nacionales de Historia de las Mujeres/ III Congreso Iberoamericano de Estudios de Género Diferencia Desigualdad. Construirnos en la diversidad, Córdoba, Spain, 2006) <<https://hemisphericinstitute.org/es/emisferica-42/4-2-review-essays/lohana-berkins.html>> [accessed 22 April 2024].

⁵⁷⁸ Frerichs, ‘Towards a Travesti Subjectivity,’ p. 306.

⁵⁷⁹ Frerichs, ‘Towards a Travesti Subjectivity,’ p.308.

⁵⁸⁰ Frerichs, ‘Towards a Travesti Subjectivity,’ pp. 305-6.

specific communities accurately and which neglects to amplify the subjectivity that the novel both creates and comments upon.

Cabezón Cámara's observation in an interview challenges preconceptions related to the *travesti* identity by directing the focal point to the specific representation of Cleopatra's lived experience: 'ella es que es una líder villera. No necesita decir 'soy travesti.' No padece discriminación.'⁵⁸¹ By stating this, Cabezón Cámara disrupts outsider narratives that seek to define Cleopatra's identity in reductive terms, highlighting the novel's critique of the limited perceptions found in hegemonic identity frameworks.⁵⁸² This limited perception is introduced in the novel by Qüity, who joins El Poso to document Cleopatra's religious and community-focused leadership, and who is particularly interested in the story partly due to Cleopatra's marginalised identity as a *travesti*. In essence, Qüity's hegemonic perspective prioritises a sense of order based on conventional notions of directionality and 'transgression' and observes Cleopatra's transness through this reductive lens. Therefore, Qüity presents the idea of Cleopatra being trans, and so, having been born male in her case and identifying with an expression and an identity within the feminine spectrum, in other words presenting to the reader a sense of 'transitioning' from a 'before Cleopatra' (Carlos Guillermo) and an 'after Cleopatra' (Kleo/Cleopatra). Nevertheless, when discussing this interest, Cleopatra undermines these preconceptions by asserting from early on that: 'que yo haya sido o no un macho no es el principio de nada,' emphasising that questions of origin or gender identity are irrelevant amidst the complexities of life in El Poso.⁵⁸³ In other words, Cleopatra challenges Qüity's viewpoint focuses on Cleopatra's story inevitably 'beginning' prior to her social transition.

⁵⁸¹ Jiménez, 'Página/12: Soy. My translation: she is a leader in the shantytown. She doesn't need to say 'I am a travesti.' She does not suffer discrimination.

⁵⁸² Fermín Rodríguez, 'La Virgen Sin Cabeza. Vida, Lenguaje, Territorio', *El Taco en la Brea*, 1.11 (2020), pp. 47–66 (14), art. 11, doi:[10.14409/tb.v1i11.9153](https://doi.org/10.14409/tb.v1i11.9153).

⁵⁸³ Rodríguez, 'La Virgen sin cabeza,' p. 55; Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 22; Translation: 'whether or not I was ever male isn't the beginning of anything,' by Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 14.

This focus on pre-transition and mid/post-transition identity, presented as a key narrative reference point and a topic of primary interest for Qüity, sharply contrasts with Cleopatra's narrative. Unlike Qüity, Cleopatra shows less interest in her *travestiveness*, instead placing emphasis on the miraculous event that she experiences, and which catalyses the subsequent events. This pivotal moment, in which she is sexually assaulted at the police station and encounters the Virgin Mary for the first time, becomes the central focus of her story. Thus, Qüity's fixation on pre-transition identity as a pivotal reference point contrasts sharply with the narrative of El Poso, revealing a disruption in cognitive awareness regarding subversiveness. As the author notes in an interview, Cleopatra's sex is irrelevant within El Poso; her identity is defined by her leadership and her integration into the collective fabric. In contrast, outsiders fixate on her identity precisely because it disrupts cis-heteropatriarchal narratives, reducing her personhood to a marker of difference. This tension underscores the dissonance between hegemonic ideals, rooted in continuity (pre- and post-transition) and binary categorisations (man/woman, male/female), and the community's emphasis on relational and collective belonging.

Riddle's text has a flexible approach when translating, much like that adopted for the term *negro*. This is likely due to the lack of suitable options in English that would convey the cultural complexity of the label. To elaborate, the term would appear to relate, on a linguistic level, most closely to 'transvestite;' however, this option would not bridge the social and cultural constructs of this term implicit in the Argentinian context as previously noted, which is greatly different from that of the Anglophone contexts and, more specifically for the case of the translation, the US's. To illustrate on the limitations of the word, some definitions for the word 'transvestite' in English include descriptions such as 'a person who wears clothes designed for the opposite sex' or 'an offensive word for a person who sometimes wears the clothes usually worn by people of a different gender, especially a man who sometimes wears the clothes, make-up, jewellery, etc. usually worn by women.'⁵⁸⁴ These definitions are already problematic and overly simplistic in the context of 'transvestite,' as expressions like 'opposite sex' perpetuate the false notion of binary

⁵⁸⁴'Transvestite,' *Cambridge Dictionary*, 2024

<<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/transvestite>> [accessed 12 April 2024].

opposition between sexes, ignoring the complexities of gender. Furthermore, framing clothing as an indicator of identity is highly unreliable. Many garments are not inherently gendered, and patriarchal norms often position masculinity as a default. Therefore, women wearing clothing traditionally designed for men are rarely perceived as transgressive but rather as neutral. Furthermore, the use of ‘travestite’ would fail to account for the unique cultural and identity dimensions of the *travesti* community in Argentina, which cannot be reduced to the notion of men dressing like women. In *La Virgen Cabeza*, the translation of ‘travestite’ takes place in some instances, with the most notable one being within the framing of Cleopatra explicitly defining the label for the reader:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
Después supe que entre las travestis están las llamadas y las escogidas, las arrastradas por la necesidad y las entregadas por vocación, que lo sabían desde siempre y entonces empezaban jóvenes: nunca hacían esos “trabajos de chongo que le arruinan el cuerpo a cualquier chica [...]” ⁵⁸⁵	Later on I found out that among transvestites there were the ones called to it innately and the ones forced into it out of necessity. The ones who’s known it forever began preparing early: they never did those ‘macho jobs that would ruin the body of a lady [...]’ ⁵⁸⁶

In this excerpt, Cleopatra explains to the reader how, from a young age, many *travestis* deliberately avoid occupations involving physical labour that might ‘masculinise’ their physique, activities that could enhance strength and musculature here associated with traditional masculinity. This preference reflects a deliberate choice by some *s* to preserve what Cleopatra terms the ‘body of a lady.’ This description reveals aspects of Cleopatra’s epistemology, the knowledge and understanding gathered over time through observing and

⁵⁸⁵ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, pp. 54-4.

⁵⁸⁶ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, pp. 44-5.

learning from the struggles and strategies of other *travestis*, which in return informs her ontology, shaping her perception of gender and sex. Cleopatra highlights how some *travestis* embrace femininity on a personal level while others are coerced into it for survival. Nevertheless, the performative outcome remains similar: a reproduction of traditional ideals of femininity, exemplified by the aspiration to maintain a non-muscular body. Such insights challenge and expand conventional perceptions of essentialism by illustrating how *s* navigate gender performance. Cleopatra's account emphasises that being a *travesti* transcends sartorial choices, embodying a complex interplay of identity, societal pressures, and personal agency. This challenges the assumptions rooted in Anglophone frameworks of transness, which in contemporary times place their focus on identity and performativity, while also showing that the *travesti* experience is, at times, a means of economic survival. Ultimately, the excerpt portrays a community that, rather than subverting the gender binary, often reinforces it, maintaining traditional constructs within the patriarchal system, but subverts discourses of essentialism from both identity and utilitarian approaches, by affording both within its meaning.

Furthermore, due to the absence of grammatical gender in English, the visibility of the term *travesti* as a feminine term is obscured until the end of the passage in the translation. When introducing 'transvestites' then, the translated text does not platform the grammatical gender that Cleopatra enforces by using 'las travestis,' as the word can either convey masculine or feminine grammatical gender. Cleopatra's use of feminine is a deliberate choice that platforms precisely the binary and aligns the term within the feminine spectrum. In the translated text, conversely, this is only revealed in the concluding remarks of the translated abstract, where the term 'lady' is introduced. In this case, the source text indicates 'el cuerpo a cualquier chica' (the body of any girl), which, upon Riddle's translation, is negotiated as 'the body of a lady.' Whereas the source text suggests the risk of compromising any girl's body, emphasising both the preestablished youth of those being described ('jóvenes' (young/youth) / 'early') and, on a contextual level, the societal beauty standard applied to women, that of a non-muscular body; the translated text instead narrows and focuses on the performativity of traditional femininity with the use of 'the body of a lady.' As such, both texts underline the patriarchal constraints of beauty standards, although the text in Spanish focuses on ontological perceptions of gender (chica/girl), whereas the text in English focuses on performativity (lady/señorita).

Riddle's version in this excerpt also opts to translate 'travestis' to 'tranvestites.' As the excerpt explains, the term *travestis* encompasses a diverse spectrum of individuals, extending far beyond the narrow interpretation of adopting clothing traditionally associated with another gender, as the translated term 'transvestite' might suggest. Instead, it includes a broad range of experiences, from those who actively embrace the *travesti* identity to those coerced into it, often through systemic factors such as involvement in prostitution. In El Poso, *travestis* are portrayed predominantly as sex workers, reflecting the precarious socioeconomic conditions many face. In the source text, Cleopatra's use of the term *travestis* represents a subversive reframing, transforming a socially stigmatised label into a symbol of empowerment by linking it to survival. An intriguing parallel emerges between the use of *travesti* and an Anglophone option, transgender. As Veanne N. Anderson notes, 'transgender' has become an umbrella term for individuals who do not identify as cisgender; in other words, it is considered to be a fluid term, continuously evolving.⁵⁸⁷ However, its meaning varies significantly depending on cultural context and personal identity. Factors such as being cisgender, heterosexual, LGBTQ+, or aligned with other identity labels shape the ways in which transgender is perceived and applied.⁵⁸⁸ Cleopatra's depiction suggests that individuals inherently considered *travestis*, who 'prepare' for this identity from an early age, bear similarities to how transgender identities are socially understood in the Anglophone sphere. Conversely, those coerced into the *travesti* community out of necessity, particularly for sex work and survival, might be categorised as transvestites in the Anglophone context. This is due to the absence of personal identification or agency behind the label, making it more of a socially related performativity.

The diversity of experiences within the *travesti* community, as depicted in the novel, presents a unique challenge for translation into the Anglophone sphere. Riddle's translation opts for 'transvestite,' a term that emphasises the outward performance of gender expression

⁵⁸⁷ Veanne N. Anderson, 'What Does Transgender Mean to You? Transgender Definitions and Attitudes toward Trans People: Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity,' *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 10.4 (2023), 600–612 (p. 601) <<https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000566>>.

⁵⁸⁸ Anderson, 'What Does Transgender Mean to You?,' pp. 601-2.

and the visibility of the *travesti* community as perceived externally. Prioritising transvestite over transgender dismisses the nuance of the term *travesti* in its connection to identity, as the translation focuses on the outward performance of the members of the community. Moreover, the choice of transvestite introduces further complications. The term is widely regarded as derogatory and has historically been used to stigmatise transgender people. Thus, while the translation attempts to engage with the community’s diversity, it risks perpetuating harmful power dynamics embedded in essentialist lenses. This option could potentially be suitable for specific contexts in which the source text is reflecting on the same power dynamics as the translated text, as both words have this connotation for harm, however it is not the explicit case for this specific segment. This reduces the complex portrayal of the community, which is a context-specific community that could be potentially introduced to Anglophone spheres as Argentine-contextual specific, or acknowledge the identity as existing in multiple Latin American contexts.

As noted earlier, the *travesti* label in the Argentinian context is quite malleable, casting a broad umbrella which contrasts with the more restricting terminologies prevalent in Anglophone contexts. Influenced by cultural and linguistic factors, these terminologies often fail to capture the term’s fluidity. This gap in linguistic equivalence can lead a translator, such as in this case Riddle, to employ alternative terms beyond ‘transvestite.’ These choices are guided by their relevance to the specific aspects of the *travesti* community being discussed, aiming to resonate with a target audience unfamiliar with the nuances of this identity in the Argentinian context. For instance, Riddle opts for more widely recognised terms, which serve as an accessible bridge for readers while still gesturing toward the complexity of the term:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
Las “hermanitas”, ex compañeras de trabajo de Cleopatra, iban y venían presurosas llevando basura, trayendo caballetes y tablonos, todo en la espalda como buenas,	The ‘little sisters,’ Cleopatra’s former co-workers, rushed back and forth, carrying away bags of rubbish and bringing improvised tables on their back like the

industriosas y maquilladísimas hormiguitas travestis . ⁵⁸⁹	good, industrious and heavily made-up drag queens they were. ⁵⁹⁰
--	--

In this segment, Qüity elaborates on the depiction of Cleopatra's former co-workers, who adopt the role of 'little sisters' within the religious dynamics shaping the newly bonded community of El Poso. In the translation into English, these groups of *travestis* are labelled as 'drag queens.' Esther Newton's *Mother Camp* provides a useful historical perspective on the term 'drag queen.' Newton notes that in mid-20th-century US, 'drag queen' was a term used within homosexual communities to describe transvestites, with 'queen' referring to any homosexual man and 'drag' signifying clothing traditionally or socially established of one sex worn by another.⁵⁹¹ Over time, the term evolved to encompass a broader range of meanings, referring to any clothing signifying a social role through a complex homosexual attitude towards social roles.⁵⁹² In this case, by opting for 'drag queens,' the translation foregrounds performative visibility, a recognisable concept in the Anglophone sphere, but at the potential cost of obscuring the intersectionality of the 'travesti' identity.⁵⁹³ This choice also shifts the reader's focus away from the multifaceted socio-cultural realities of Cleopatra's co-workers, which include not only performative expression but also identity and survival through community-building within a marginalised group. It is also important to note, however, that drag queens are not inherently linked to sex work, and their deliberate exaggeration of femininity often serves as a humorous commentary on societal norms rather than a reflection of lived experiences of gender. While the term 'drag queen' effectively

⁵⁸⁹ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 52.

⁵⁹⁰ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 42.

⁵⁹¹ Newton, *Mother Camp*, p. 3.

⁵⁹² Newton, *Mother Camp*, p. 3.

⁵⁹³ To name a few mainstream and independent films that have been popular in the Anglophone context, as noted by Jack Halberstam, and have, or have prominently featured, drag queens include: *Some Like It Hot* (1959, dir. Billy Wilder), *Tootsie* (1982, dir. Sydney Pollack), *Wigstock* (1993, dir. Tom Rubnitz), *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* (1994, dir. Stephan Elliot), *The Crying Game* (1992, dir. Neil Jordan), *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993, dir. Chris Columbus). Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Duke University Press, 1998), p. 301.

captures certain visual and performative aspects of Cleopatra’s co-workers, such as their dramatic makeup and theatricality, partly relevant to this segment, it diverges from other dimensions integral to the *travesti* identity as depicted in *La Virgen Cabeza*. In the case of the novel, the *travesti*’s performance of femininity as satire but as a survival strategy or an expression of identity. Therefore, the contrast between the translation’s framing and the source text’s effect reflects broader challenges in translating culturally and politically loaded terms that some translators may opt for negotiating instead of migrating into the new context.

Another instance of the translator employing a culturally adapted vocabulary arises in the following segment, where a slur commonly used to demean transgender individuals in the Anglophone sphere is opted for in the translation: ‘tranny.’ In this case, the term is spoken by Qüity, a character who does not belong to the *travesti* community, retaining its offensive tone within the Anglophone sphere:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
[...] las travestis villeras nacen murciélagas, viven vestidas para la noche. ⁵⁹⁴	[...] shantytown trannies are like bats: they live life dressed for the night. ⁵⁹⁵

In this section, the translator diverges from earlier choices, such as ‘transvestite’ and ‘drag queen,’ by opting for the slur ‘trannies’ to render *travestis*, a decision that introduces significant interpretative shift. In the source text, Qüity’s use of the term *travestis* suggests a growing familiarity with and alignment to Cleopatra’s conceptualisation of the community. This choice implies that, as an outsider, her perspective is informed and empathetic, reflecting an ongoing process of integration into El Poso. In the translated version, however,

⁵⁹⁴ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 55.

⁵⁹⁵ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 45.

the use of the slur ‘trannies’ introduces ambiguity. While the term might aim to convey familiarity and community belonging, its use by an outsider like Qüity reflects her dominant position within the social hierarchy, potentially reproducing the power dynamics at play. Still, the term ‘tranny’ is used throughout the translated text by both Cleopatra and Qüity. When articulated by Qüity in retrospect, as she narrates the account, the slur could suggest her assimilation into the *travesti* community, if not as a *travesti* herself, then, empathetically, as a ‘*travesti*’s lover.’ This shift in her positionality highlights a possible reinterpretation of her relationship with Cleopatra and the community, portraying Qüity as a figure who has moved from an external observer to an integrated member of a chosen family unit. Nevertheless, the reappropriation of slurs is typically a practice undertaken within a community as a means of empowerment and solidarity rather than performed by those external to it. This interpretation, then, resonates with the broader cultural associations of the slur, which carry deeply offensive and derogatory connotations in the Anglophone context, especially when articulated by outsiders. In the French translation by Guillaume Contré, the homophobic content of the novel for instance is maintained, such as the translation of the highly offensive ‘puto del orto’ (similar to ‘fucking faggot’) to the French as ‘putain de fiote’, perpetuating violence through language yet, as Balcázar identifies, avoiding within the economy of violence what can be considered the worst form of violence, which would be silence.⁵⁹⁶ Considering this, the use of the slur ‘tranny’ in itself within the novel could point to a representation of systematic oppression of marginalised identities, while reproducing the potential violence inherent in the term *travesti*, at times. However, the translation’s strategies surrounding potentially sensitive terms remains inconsistent, as the option of affording a slur contrasts with the translator’s earlier decision to avoid potentially sensitive terms like *negro*, and for example, not adhering to the use of racial slurs, suggesting a more cautious approach to US sensitivities surrounding race than surrounding queerness.

⁵⁹⁶ Balcázar does not provide explicit examples of silence as violence; however, one can infer that if the translation had censored the homophobic content, the resulting omission would erase the portrayal of discrimination that is intrinsic to Cleopatra’s struggles. Such censorship would invisibilise these struggles for the audience and, in doing so, would neither expose nor denounce them, ultimately reproducing the very structures of marginalisation the novel contests. Balcázar, ‘Traducir la violencia,’ p. 83, 85.

Overall, this appears to be an adopted term by the translator to avoid integrating the term *travesti* into the Anglophone audience and attempting to use a wide range of terminology circumventing the identity marker of *travesti*, in this case, reproducing the harmful or derogatory ways in which this term can be used socially, especially in hegemonic cis and heterosexual spaces. The choice of ‘trannies’ as articulated by Qüity raises questions about how Qüity’s positionality is framed in the translation and whether it disregards the term as a potential risk for Western sensitivities in a similar way as *negro* has been considered to be. In this way, Riddle’s translation, characterised by the use of diverse terminology rather than a singular term like ‘transvestite,’ intentionally introduces a less defined and far more plastic nomenclature for the community. While this approach enriches the social portrayal by highlighting the diversity within the group and attempts to approach and partially localise the community for the Anglophone reader, it simultaneously dilutes the cohesion that the term *travesti* conveys in the source text. The deliberate diversification of terms diffuses the identity across a spectrum of labels, obscuring the sense of a unified community. This choice raises questions about the group’s collective identity portrayed in the translation and its implications for readers unfamiliar with the source context.

Queer: On Migration and Assimilation of Identity Labels

The analysis of power dynamics and the translation of culturally specific, non-mappable terms such as *negro* and *travesti*, has led to a complex understanding of the identity labels used in *La Virgen Cabeza*. With this complex understanding of the power dynamics and the vocabulary used in the source text and how this has been negotiated in the translation, this section turns to an analysis of the sexuality and gender identities in *La Virgen Cabeza*. This section zooms in on the novel’s engagement with queer as a process, the representation of trans* identity, and the fluid sexualities of its protagonists. Cabezón Cámara has shared her vision for *La Virgen Cabeza* to explicitly challenge entrenched hierarchies and advocate for an egalitarian society where marginalised identities are not relegated to the periphery but are fully integrated into public and cultural life. For instance, she shared in the following interview with reference to *La Virgen Cabeza*:

La diferencia entre la alta y la baja cultura está disuelta. Esto puede considerarse como una apuesta de lo que una quisiera que sucediera con las identidades en la sociedad. Que se mezcle la travesti con el presidente de la nación, no en una relación prostibularia sino en una igualitaria, en un ámbito público, por ejemplo. Que cada uno se mezcle con lo que le dé las ganas de mezclarse.⁵⁹⁷

This reflection made by the author notes her deliberate effort to dissolve the boundaries separating diverse cultural realms. Specifically, it offers the example of an encounter between a *travesti* and the nation's president, not in a hierarchical power dynamic, but as equals in a public setting. Here, the novel's thematic emphasis on equality shines through, particularly in its aim to disrupt prevailing hierarchies that perpetuate the marginalisation of specific individuals as inherently 'abject.'

This consideration for subverting societal power dynamics that marginalise specific individuals is central to *La Virgen Cabeza*. Cleopatra embodies these broader efforts to dismantle hierarchies and directly challenges normative frameworks through, for example, her relational dynamics. To illustrate, Qüity's description of Cleopatra as 'queerer' in the line: 'A mi hijita ya le gustaban los discursos de la más queer de sus madres'⁵⁹⁸ As previously discussed, the term 'queer' operates as a radical departure from fixed sexual identities, resisting categorisation or essence; in other words, it functions as a 'floating signifier.'⁵⁹⁹ In this segment in the novel, Gil notes that Qüity's statement prompts readers to view Cleopatra through a lens devoid of rigid definitions.⁶⁰⁰ This way, she can encompass all descriptors

⁵⁹⁷ Jiménez, 'Página/12.' My translation: The difference between high and low culture is dissolved. This can be seen as a statement of what one would wish to happen with identities in society. That a transvestite mixes with the president of the nation, not in a transactional relationship but in an egalitarian one, in a public sphere, for instance. That each person mixes with whatever they feel like mixing with.

⁵⁹⁸ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 17; Translation: 'My daughter enjoyed the speeches of the queerer of her two mothers'; Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 9.

⁵⁹⁹ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*.

⁶⁰⁰ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 22.

used to define or refer to Cleopatra throughout the novel, including ‘puto,’ ‘lesbiana,’ ‘hombre,’ ‘mujer,’ and ‘trans,’ thus encouraging an understanding of Cleopatra as an amalgamation of social and lived experiences.⁶⁰¹ Therefore, the use of ‘queer’ is defined as an opposition to normative constructs. In other words, Cleopatra’s queerness, as framed by Quiñy, illustrates the novel’s interrogation of fixed identities and its embrace of fluidity and multiplicity in the pursuit of dismantling societal hierarchies. The non-specificity of ‘queer’ enables it to challenge rigid categories and hierarchies that underpin normative sexual and gender identities. As an expansive and fluid term, ‘queer’ serves as a horizon of possibility, reimagining relationships among sexual behaviours, erotic identities, gender constructions, knowledge systems, and community practices; dynamics embedded within the subversive *travesti* community of El Poso.⁶⁰²

In her first chapter, Cleopatra introduces this rejection of rigid gender binaries, declaring: ‘La verdad es que no fui nunca un macho, querida mía.’⁶⁰³ In this way, Cleopatra, who is born male, openly rejects having been one (‘no fui nunca’). This statement underscores Cleopatra’s rejection of sex as a relevant aspect of her identity. Her identity as a is not only exhibited through feminine expression, both linguistically and aesthetically but also reflects her broader rejection of rigid gender and sexual roles. This rejection, which finds at its core the concept of multiplicity as a destabilising principle, is exemplified in her celebration of traits associated with both female and male bodies, as can be seen in the following excerpt: ‘Y ya ves, te conseguistes [...] la mejor mina y la poronga más grande del conurbano bonaerense.’⁶⁰⁴ Here, Cleopatra is akin to the trans* identity as formulated by Jack Halberstam.⁶⁰⁵ Halberstam suggests employing ‘trans*,’ with an asterisk, to distinguish

⁶⁰¹ Gil, ‘El devenir queer de Cleopatra,’ p. 22.

⁶⁰² Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, p. 61.

⁶⁰³ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 22; Translation: The truth is I was never male, my dearest; Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 14.

⁶⁰⁴ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 78; Translation: And in the end you got [...] the best chick and the biggest dick in the whole of greater Buenos Aires; Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 68.

⁶⁰⁵ This term is explored in detail in Jack Halberstam, *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability* (University of California Press, 2017).

‘trans’ concerning identities that commonly express directionality and a definitive objective from a state of inherent fluidity.⁶⁰⁶ In this way, through the fluid use of vocabulary to self-refer due to its consistent change of direction, without the intention to adopt a normative goal, and without an explicit desire to present uniquely female or male, Cleopatra can be understood within the Anglophone context as ‘trans*.’

The transgressiveness of her fluidity remains constant throughout the novel, more specifically through her constant openness to redefinition, as evidenced in her self-characterisation: ‘Lesbiana resucité, me parece.’⁶⁰⁷ This reflection is shared by Cleopatra after her first romantic and sexual exchange with Qüity. She reclaims a new label for herself that does not necessarily insinuate that previous labels have been negotiated or discarded but instead maintained as a juxtaposition of multiple images in a hologram that forms and informs ‘Cleopatra.’ Moreover, Qüity’s use of ‘queer’ not only situates Cleopatra within this conceptual horizon but also subtly suggests that Qüity herself aligns with the term since she explicitly states ‘queerer.’ The potential for Qüity’s queerness is revealed in the novel as subordinate to Cleopatra’s influence since Qüity initially identified herself as heterosexual and does not demonstrate any signs of transness:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
[...] por las tetas, que las tengo y bastante grandes. Para haber sido heterosexual hay que decir que te prendiste como una loca, no parabas más, y con esos pezones de yegua que te gustan tanto y que tan caros nos	[...] because of my tits, even though they’re pretty big. For someone who claims to be straight , I have to say you went pretty crazy for them, and when I got these huge nipples that you love so much and that cost us a fortune to redo in Miami you made me feel

⁶⁰⁶ Halberstam, *Trans**, pp. 4-5; Gil, ‘El devenir queer de Cleopatra,’ p. 21.

⁶⁰⁷ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 141; Translation: I’ve been resurrected as a lesbian, I think; Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 129.

costaron en su versión miamense me haces sentir la loba de Rómulo y Remo. ⁶⁰⁸	like the wolf that nursed both Remus and Romulus. ⁶⁰⁹
--	--

In this passage, a significant shift takes place between the texts. In Cabezón Cámara's text, the verb modulating Qüity's identification with heterosexuality is expressed in the compound infinitive ('haber sido' / 'to have been'), indicating a state prior to the reference point. Therefore, it indicates a shift in Qüity's orientation, which, according to the account by Cleopatra, suggests that Qüity is 'no longer heterosexual.' In Riddle's text, conversely, the verb tense is presented in the present form ('claims to be'), suggesting that Qüity still identifies as heterosexual.

The effect of the source text is that of insinuating Qüity's transition and change, which is further reinforced by two key pieces of evidence: Qüity self-perceiving as 'queer' and her sexual and romantic relationship with Cleopatra. This relationship is perceived as dissident from normative heterosexual behaviours as represented in this excerpt, i.e. engaging with sexual desire and fixation on female traits, being Qüity herself female. In contrast, the translation introduces a conflicting interpretation. It portrays Qüity as queer, as previously introduced, and also as heterosexual. This duality reinforces the idea of Qüity's ongoing ambivalence toward Cleopatra's queerness and trans* identity, suggesting a stronger field of relational conflict in their perceptions of each other. Moreover, it destabilises the concept of heterosexuality itself, framing it as a construct vulnerable to redefinition and disruption within the dynamics of their relationship by expanding its possibility of formulation and experience. This difference between the texts offers a distinct approach to queerness as a floating signifier. Cleopatra's relationship with Qüity exemplifies a similar destabilisation to Hall's analysis of floating signifiers as socially constructed umbrellas not tied to biological truths, since Qüity's romantic and sexual engagement with Cleopatra invites a redefinition of her normative labels, such as heterosexuality, through

⁶⁰⁸ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 23.

⁶⁰⁹ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, pp. 15-6.

negotiation and relational dynamics.⁶¹⁰ The concept of floating signifiers here emphasises how Cleopatra's queerness and transness disrupt fixed categorisations by demonstrating their dependence on context and perception. In this sense, the translation's portrayal of Qüity as both aligned with heterosexuality and engaging in non-normative behaviours highlights the performative and constructed nature of these labels. In this way, her identity is subversive of the normative expectations of heterosexuality, challenging the power dynamic rooted in the cis-heteronormative society. In other words, if Cleopatra remains in every marker a marginalised identity that is in constant plasticity and which does not transgress from its peripheral positionality to the nuclei of normativity, her effect on Qüity forces a reconsideration of these structures, which in turn it subverts the central position and apparent monolithic nature of heteronormativity.

From Carlos Guillermo to Cleopatra and the trifecta of Susana, Perón, and the Virgin Mary

The destabilisation of normative categories through queerness' fluidity has been central in the previous analysis to best understand the protagonists' identities and how they permeate with each other. Precisely due to this destabilisation of hegemonic power structures, and the discussion of fluid identity, it comes to the attention of this section the use of cultural references to inform one's gender performativity. Cleopatra's aesthetic, for example, draws upon references from influential cultural figures. Most specifically, she constructs her structure of aesthetic-identity with inspiration, aspiration, and guidance from: María Susana Giménez Aubert (aspiration), Eva Perón (inspiration), and the Virgin Mary (guidance).⁶¹¹ The representation of this complex structure of influence is presented in some cases explicitly in the novel, and others are culturally embedded and implied, which offer

⁶¹⁰ Hall, *Selected Writings*, p. 361.

⁶¹¹ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 18.

insights into the character in subtle ways that are challenging to translate, due to the lack of a shared popular culture between the texts.

One of the first figures presented in this system of inspiration and aspiration is that of the renowned Argentine TV presenter, Susana Giménez. María Susana Giménez Aubert is a prominent celebrity who worked as an actress, model, TV host and businesswoman. Amongst her notable works, the TV show ‘Hola Susana, te estamos llamando’ (Hello Susana, we are ringing you), holds particular significance, being one of the most popular programs at the time that garnered a wide audience. The show even secured a place in the Guinness World Records due to its staggering volume of letters and phone calls received.⁶¹² As analysed by María Agustina Sabich, the TV show’s narratives often revolved around themes of luxury, presenting men as formal and elegant, and depicting women as sensual.⁶¹³ Moreover, it maintained a narrative that platformed stories of women’s socio-economic ascension through marriage and maternity.⁶¹⁴ The presence of religious themes, portraying the Catholic God as a symbol of gratitude and privilege attained through personal sacrifice and marital commitment, further underscored the show’s adherence to heteronormative discourse, legitimising the social ascent of women through marriage to a man while retaining the values of their original social class.⁶¹⁵ Ultimately, as Sabich notes, Susana Giménez’s show reinforces inequalities across various categories, including gender, social class, culture and language (due to its Eurocentrism).⁶¹⁶

Cleopatra’s engagement with this celebrity, who projected an image of desirable identity rooted in conservative, traditional values, and thereby perpetuated existing power

⁶¹² Marisa Quiroga, ‘“Hola Susana” Hizo Olas,’ *Archive from La Nación*, 2008
<<https://web.archive.org/web/20080505211534/http://www.ayudatareas.com.ar/noticias2/8/archivo-g548.shtml>> [accessed 11 April 2024].

⁶¹³ María Agustina Sabich, ‘Mujeres, madres y modelos: representaciones mediáticas en el living de SUSna Giménez,’ *Question/Cuestión*, 1.41 (2014), 264–73 (pp. 265-266)
<<https://perio.unlp.edu.ar/ojs/index.php/question/article/view/2059>> [accessed 11 April 2024].

⁶¹⁴ Sabich, ‘Mujeres, madres y modelos,’ pp. 265-266.

⁶¹⁵ Sabich, ‘Mujeres, madres y modelos,’ pp. 266-7.

⁶¹⁶ Sabich, ‘Mujeres, madres y modelos,’ pp. 269-70.

structures and inequalities, reveals some of the character’s aspirational values. The TV show serves as a platform catering to those who aspire to the social ascent depicted in its narratives, so most particularly working-class and lower-class women, such as Cleopatra. In this way, Cleopatra’s sense of femininity or aspirational identity, is partly that of the luxurious, religious, and sensual woman. To illustrate, the following fragment introduces the reader to the celebrity figure Susana, through what it is assumed to be a shared understanding of who Susana is due to her celebrity status. In here, Cleopatra’s journey of self-discovery and transformation is introduced as beginning in her teenage years when Cleopatra, then known as Carlos Guillermo, confronts great adversity:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
<p>Tenía doce años, todavía se llamaba Carlos Guillermo y su padre casi la había matado a trompadas “por puto del orto”, según le explicó al periodista de Crónica, que tituló: “Barbarie homofóbica. Casi mata a su hijo mayor porque el nene quiere ser como Susana”. Fueron a entrevistarla al hospital, la diva se conmovió cuando supo cuánto la adoraba el nene, lo invitó a su programa y ahí Carlos Guillermo decididamente se transformó en Kleo, todavía en muletas, pero bailando encantada con las boas que la diva le puso al cuello.⁶¹⁷</p>	<p>She was twelve years old, she was still called Carlos Guillermo and her father had almost beaten her to death ‘for being a fucking faggot,’ as was explained in an article for the obscenely sensationalist newspaper Crónica published under the headline: Homophobic Brutality: Father Nearly Kills Oldest Son for Wanting to Be Like Susana. The press went to interview the boy at the hospital, and the TV diva was so touched when she found out how much the boy loved her that she invited him onto her show. That’s when Carlos Guillermo was definitively transformed into Kleo, still on crutches but dancing</p>

⁶¹⁷ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 34.

	delightedly with the feather boas the diva placed around his neck. ⁶¹⁸
--	---

This account reflects Cleopatra's journey as she is 'transformed' from Carlos Guillermo to Kleo, capturing her personal evolution and societal struggles. The name of 'Kleo' here designates a distinctive 'persona' or performative identity that Cleopatra uses when engaged in sex work: 'Cleopatra, Kleo cuando anunciaba en el rubro.'⁶¹⁹ Embracing a different name is commonplace within the sphere, serving both as an artistic alias and a means of disassociation.⁶²⁰ This practice establishes a clear distinction between Cleopatra's self-perception in her daily life and her explicit role as a sex worker. The struggles faced by Cleopatra, in this case in her first 'persona' Kleo, are underscored by the physical and sensationalist violence imposed upon her, in this case through her father's abuse and the exploitative tendencies of tabloid media. In the source text, this sensationalist exploitation is mediated through a reference to *Crónica*, a widely recognised Buenos Aires newspaper known for its yellow journalism, a kind of journalism characterised by sensationalism and dramatic or exaggerated headlines. The translated text amplifies this reference by framing and contextualising *Crónica* as an 'obscenely sensationalist newspaper,' ensuring that the sensationalist character is fully conveyed to an audience unfamiliar with the Argentine context.

Following this, Susana, contextualised for the target audience as a TV diva, extends an invitation to Carlos Guillermo to appear on her show. This invitation marks the pivotal moment of Carlos Guillermo's transformation into Kleo, portrayed as a metamorphosis with ritualistic undertones. Throughout this transformation, Kleo uses crutches, which are a symbolic reminder of the physical abuse she has endured. This portrayal serves as a critique

⁶¹⁸ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 26.

⁶¹⁹ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 33; Translation: Cleopatra - or 'Kleo,' as she called herself when she used to advertise her services; Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 25.

⁶²⁰ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 21.

of the physical and structural violence frequently inflicted on those who defy hegemonic (cis)gender norms, highlighting the risks faced by individuals who challenge these boundaries.⁶²¹ This act serves a dual purpose: exploiting and empowering Cleopatra's struggle. The scene takes on the semblance of a ritual of acceptance, with Susana adorning Kleo with feathered boas, symbolising both inclusion and transformation. Through this symbolic 'baptism,' Kleo is 'born' and introduced to society in a manner that intertwines adoration with media exploitation, crafting a complex scene of validation and vulnerability. This moment is critical in shaping the identity of Kleo, which becomes interconnected with the idea of performance, not only through this transformation in front of the cameras but also later on as she uses the name Kleo when promoting her sex work. In this scene, Gil notes that such moments in the novel challenge rigid gender binaries by showcasing the performance of femininity by individuals assigned male at birth, suggesting that these performances denaturalise the normativity of the man/woman binomial.⁶²² Building on this, Halberstam argues that 'masculinity must not, cannot, and should not reduce to the male body and its effects,' emphasising that gendered expressions are not inherently tied to biological sex.⁶²³ Together, these perspectives underscore how male individuals can perform femininity without necessarily aligning with or redefining their identities, and the same could be assumed of other sexes, creating a more fluid understanding of gender expression through dissidence, and which naturally highlights dissidence through fluidity.

In the source text, Cabezón Cámara uses the word 'decididamente' (decisively), which is rendered in the translation as 'definitively.' This subtle shift introduces a difference in how Cleopatra's perspective is conveyed. *Decididamente* in Spanish emphasises agency, reflecting Cleopatra's transformation from Carlos Guillermo into Kleo as a deliberate, self-determined act. In contrast, *definitivamente* (definitely) suggests finality or inevitability, a resolution that may not inherently carry the same sense of personal agency. As a result, the translation presents Cleopatra's transformation as a conclusive outcome, potentially shaped by circumstances or determination, but without the active decisiveness conveyed in the

⁶²¹ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 17.

⁶²² Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 17.

⁶²³ Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, p. 1.

source text. Another alternation in the translated text is particularly evident when the feminine form ‘encantada’ (‘delightedly’) is introduced in the source text following the transformation into Kleo. Throughout the passage, Cleopatra consistently refers to herself in the feminine when recounting this episode from her childhood, whereas Qüity’s portrayal is inconsistent, shifting between masculine (using terms like ‘el nene’/‘the boy’ and ‘lo’/‘him’) and feminine linguistic forms (such as ‘la/she’). This inconsistency is effectively reproduced throughout the passage with one specific difference: where the masculine possessive ‘his (neck)’ is offered at the end. This choice undermines the portrayal of a ‘complete’ transformation that Qüity is narrating in the translation. By initially using feminine forms and transitioning into the masculine, Qüity creates a sense of temporality, a progression from Carlos Guillermo to Kleo, from a linguistically expressed masculine identity to a linguistically expressed feminine one and, in the source text, this is marked in the metamorphosis with the use of ‘encantada’ (‘delighted,’ f.). The translation’s preserving of the masculine form (‘his’) instead disrupts this narrative flow, missing the specific playful rhythm offered by the sequence order of the source text.

Another relevant figure that informs and inspires Cleopatra’s feminine expression is the historical figure of Eva Perón. Eva Duarte, who later assumed the name Eva Perón when she wed Juan Perón in 1945, is famously known as ‘Evita.’ Eva Perón advocated for traditional concepts of femininity, assuring men that women’s empowerment would not threaten traditional ideas of femininity; rather, it would accentuate them, positioning women as subservient to God, Argentina, and Perón before themselves.⁶²⁴ She strongly disavowed any affiliation with feminist principles, openly opposing feminist movements, characterising them as adopting foreign ideals, embodying masculine traits, exhibiting snobbery, and perpetuating cultural imperialism.⁶²⁵ Nevertheless, through a contemporary UK-based lens, Eva and Juan Perón’s contributions to women’s rights can be considered feminist to an extent, as for example, Eva orchestrated suffrage rallies and lobbied in Congress for the bill granting women the right to vote, which was acquired in 1947, amongst other improvements

⁶²⁴ Marifran Carlson, *¡Feminismo!: The Woman’s Movement in Argentina From Its Beginnings to Eva Perón* (Academy Chicago Publishers, 1988), p. 189.

⁶²⁵ Carlson, *¡Feminismo!*, p. 195.

on women's rights.⁶²⁶ While the bill was an important milestone, most feminist factions of the era strongly opposed it due to its potential for reversal (potential that was, in fact, confirmed as it was nullified after Juan Perón's presidency).⁶²⁷ Other contributions to women's rights forwarded during Perón's presidency include the prohibition of piecework, limitations on women's weekly working hours to 44, the establishment of a minimum wage for women engaged in domestic work, attempts to narrow the gender pay gap, and Eva Perón's advocacy for a government subsidy for mothers based on the number of children, although this last one was not implemented.⁶²⁸ Ultimately, her legacy fostered a social narrative that women could ascend socially and economically, provided they maintained a connection to their origins, in a way reminiscent of Susana Giménez, thus garnering the support of working-class women.⁶²⁹

As Fermín Rodríguez notes, Cleopatra adopts Eva Perón's aesthetics to engage in affective politics in the villa.⁶³⁰ Cleopatra positions herself as a 'quasi-mother to the poor' and inevitably fosters a gendered perspective of politics that perpetuates gendered dynamics.⁶³¹ Moreover, her theatricality echoes the 'brokers' examined by Javier Auyero.⁶³² These brokers, including Cleopatra here, are described as having bleached blonde hair and aspire to emulate Eva Perón.⁶³³ They embody and reinterpret Eva Perón's image while steering clear of extreme historical narratives. This includes avoiding the Black Myth, which depicts Eva as vulgar and power-hungry, as well as the portrayal of a 'Revolutionary Eva' that leftist and guerrilla groups envision as a proto-socialist leader.⁶³⁴ Instead, they reimagine

⁶²⁶ Carlson, *¡Feminismo!*, pp. 188-9.

⁶²⁷ Carlson, *¡Feminismo!*, pp. 189.

⁶²⁸ Carlson, *¡Feminismo!*, p. 193.

⁶²⁹ Carlson, *¡Feminismo!*, p. 192.

⁶³⁰ Rodríguez, 'La Virgen Sin Cabeza', p. 51.

⁶³¹ Javier Auyero, 'Performing Evita: A Tale of Two Peronist Women,' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 27.4 (1999), 461-93 (p. 469) <<https://doi.org/10.1177/089124199129023307>>.

⁶³² Auyero, 'Performing Evita,' p. 469.

⁶³³ Auyero, 'Performing Evita,' p. 479.

⁶³⁴ Auyero, 'Performing Evita,' p. 479.

her as the ‘Lady of Hope.’⁶³⁵ In this context, a broker serves as an intermediary between the political figure and the constituents (in this case, voters), and, in the case of Cleopatra, she assumes the role of an intermediary between the Virgin Mary and the inhabitants of the villa. Contrary to the broker’s idealised portrayal of Eva, however, Cleopatra does not embody purity; rather, she embodies the Eva Perón depicted by Néstor Perlongher, as noted by Rodríguez: a blonde, heavily made-up and sexually liberated figure.⁶³⁶ Cleopatra’s appropriation of Eva’s aesthetics and politics operates as a deliberate act of identity construction that negotiates power, gender and affective labour. This appropriation foregrounds how femininity itself is performative and politicised, serving as both a resource of empowerment and a mode of compliance within patriarchal structures. From a feminist translation perspective, this underscores the importance of preserving such cultural complexity, as translation here platforms the political empowerment of Cleopatra as she embodies and reinterprets Eva, carrying specific cultural resonances rooted in Argentine history, gender politics, and class struggle, elements being at risk of erasure if not accounted in the translation. This accounts to the broader focus of this thesis, which highlights the relevance of intersectionality for feminist translation, as in order to develop a complex and well-informed feminist practice, a feminist translator must first familiarise themselves in great depth with the language and power dynamics involved in representing marginalised identities, recognising the socio-political opportunities of translation. The depiction of Cleopatra here, as both a broker and a gendered political figure, exemplifies how translation can disrupt entrenched hierarchies and foreground the agency of marginalised voices.

Transgender, Transexual, Transgression, Translation: To Trans*

There have been previous explorations on the labelling of Cleopatra by scholars, a conversation to which this thesis contributes through an analysis of culturally embedded

⁶³⁵ Auyero, ‘Performing Evita,’ p. 479.

⁶³⁶ Rodríguez, ‘La Virgen Sin Cabeza,’ p. 52; Néstor Perlongher, *Evita Vive e Outras Prosas* (Editora Iluminuras Ltda, 2001), pp. 23-28.

identity labels, such as *travesti*. This analysis follows Douglas Robinson's conceptualisation of 'translingual address', defined as:

[...] a term for transitional intersubjectivity, the hermeneutical movement of a subject-in-transit. It implies empathetic exposure to and experience of at least two cultures—such as cisnormative and transgender, binary and nonbinary, Finnish and English—and the resulting ability to shift attitudinally, perspectively, in moving from one to the other.⁶³⁷

This concept offers a productive lens for understanding the role of translation in translating *La Virgen Cabeza*. In this way, this section conceptualises Cleopatra not as a fixed identity but as a subject whose selfhood emerges through ongoing negotiations, translation, and transformation, or in other words a subject-in-transit. With this empathetic approach to both cultures, Cleopatra presents a challenging case for translingual address. Regarding Cleopatra's umbrella identity, however, Gil proposes the term 'trans' as fitting for her, encompassing her identity as a transgender, transsexual, and *travesti* character.⁶³⁸ More specifically, Gil engages with Halberstam's conceptualisation of 'trans*,' with an asterisk, to distinguish 'trans' as denoting identities that commonly express directionality and a definitive objective, from a state of inherent fluidity.⁶³⁹ Therefore, Cleopatra's consistent change of identity markers suggests a high level of fluidity best captured by the label trans*. This issue is complex, as Gil's analysis seeks to situate Cleopatra's *identity* within a mappable term, which is in this case, originally from an English-speaking context. However, the label trans* does not carry the specificity of *travesti* as demonstrated, if the label *travesti* is to be understood in the way Cleopatra describes it, a category that does not demand translation but can instead be rendered accessible through paratextual strategies such as a footnote or preface. Yet, the conceptualisation of Cleopatra's *travesti* identity aligns closely with Halberstam's notion of trans* precisely because of Cleopatra's ontological fluidity. On

⁶³⁷ Douglas Robinson, *Transgender, Translation, Translingual Address* (Bloomsbury, 2019), p. x.

⁶³⁸ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 21.

⁶³⁹ Gil, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra,' p. 21.

a literary level, Cleopatra's trans* portrayal aligns with Foucault's idea of transgression as a continuous act of crossing and repositioning boundaries, testing and redefining societal norms without dismantling them entirely.⁶⁴⁰ This resonates with Silvina Sánchez's observation that the protagonists of *La Virgen Cabeza* inhabit a liminal space marked by perpetual transition, highlighting the transformative potential of such spaces, in this case extending this influence of fluidity to the space that is El Poso for example.⁶⁴¹ This parallel underscores the productive potential of translating identity as an interpretative negotiation, which can reflect the dynamics of translingual address in the instability of categorical boundaries, and which can, alternatively, become non-negotiable linguistically, and import the term with its conceptualisation so that the target readership experiences the translingual address between radically different ontologies of gender experiences.

The 'translingual address' is a concept coined by Douglas Robinson to examine how translation functions as a form of 'speaking for someone else', highlighting the ethical and political dimensions of translating transgender identities and experiences, to which I add other intersectional combinations. In 'translingual address' refers to the intersubjective engagement between cisgender and transgender individuals facilitated by translation. In this way my analysis aligns with an interest for 'translingual address', as Cleopatra's trans* identity underscores the importance of recognising and preserving the complexities of transgender identities in translation. In other words, this is a challenge for translators to engage with texts in ways that honour the lived experiences and agency of transgender individuals, advocating for translations that are socially and politically responsible. Similarly, the novel's translation into a new linguistic and cultural context can be seen as a form of transitioning that mirrors the characters' transgressive identities even further. In Foucault's terms, this translation repositions the limits of Cleopatra's identity, for example, within a new horizon, inviting further acts of crossing that unsettle normative frameworks. It is then in this migration and in Cleopatra's fluidity, in this double transitioning, that the

⁶⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, 'A Preface to Transgression,' in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, by Michel Foucault, ed. by James Faubion, trans. by Robert Hurley and others (Penguin Classics, 2020), pp. 69–87, p. 73.

⁶⁴¹ Sánchez, 'La Fuerza De Juntarnos,' p. 422.

transgressiveness of the novel and its translation are highlighted. In other words, aligning with Paul B. Preciado's approach to migration and sex change, this act of transitioning is conceptualised as inherently transgressive, challenging the political and legal frameworks of patriarchal colonialism, sexual differentiation, and the nation-state.⁶⁴² Preciado reveals how these regimes reinforce rigid borders and normative constructs of singularity, such as fixed identities or cultures, and thus, these acts of transgression are subversive.⁶⁴³ Cleopatra's transness ultimately reflects this dynamic: her differentiation from cis-heteropatriarchal norms and her migration into an Anglophone cultural context together extend the scope of her transgression, positioning her as a destabilising figure across national and ideological boundaries.

In the novel, the ways characters refer to Cleopatra reflect shifting social perceptions of her identity. Some use masculine grammatical gender, reinforcing a discourse steeped in animosity and often punctuated by homophobic slurs, such as *maricón* (translated as the slur 'fag' in the US or 'poof' in the UK). Others, however, adopt the feminine form, even when employing derogatory language, most notably through the term *maricona*. Qüity's choice of *maricona* over *maricón*, for instance, is particularly significant, as it acknowledges Cleopatra's claim to a feminine linguistic space. Cleopatra, in turn, subverts these acts of aggression by reframing their meaning within the symbolic order of the *travesti* community in El Poso. Rather than prioritising linguistic violence or the absence of governmental recognition (concerns presumed to be central to figures like Qüity) Cleopatra shifts attention to the broader societal power dynamics of oppression, emphasising survival as the community's most urgent concern. As she herself asserts:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
-------------------------	----------------

⁶⁴² Paul B. Preciado, *Un Apartamento En Urano: Crónicas Del Cruce*, 1st Edition (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2019), p. 29.

⁶⁴³ Preciado, *Un Apartamento En Urano*, p. 29.

<p>Y no estamos hablando de que nos pongan nuestros nombres de mujer en los documentos, total nadie tenía documentos allá, estábamos hablando del derecho a vivir aunque nos dijeran Guillermo, Jonathan o Ramón.⁶⁴⁴</p>	<p>And we're not talking about them putting our female names on documents, no one had documents there, we were talking about the right to live even if they called us Guillermo, Jonathan, or Ramón.⁶⁴⁵</p>
--	---

Cleopatra's statement in this segment moves beyond surface-level concerns of gender identity, emphasising the fundamental struggle for the basic human right to live. She undermines the value of bureaucratic barriers that prevent the *travesti* community from formalising their chosen names as women in governmental records, prioritising the immediate need for survival over symbolic gestures of official recognition. By doing so, she challenges the importance placed on identification processes and formal transitioning, shifting the locus of power from external validation to an intrinsic understanding of existence. Nevertheless, these excerpts reveal a key negotiation in translation, particularly regarding the term *mujer* (specifically 'nombres de mujer') which has been rendered as 'female names' rather than 'women's names.' While the source text refers to women's names without invoking biological implications, the translation introduces a biological dimension by using the word 'female.' This choice amplifies a perception of Cleopatra's transness as subordinate to the male/female binary, reinforcing a biologically inflected interpretation of gender. At the same time, this framing undermines Cleopatra's subversiveness, especially her fluid and celebratory embrace of her male genitalia, which consistently disrupts conventional gender norms throughout the novel. From Cleopatra's perspective, she identifies as a 'woman,' but this does not necessarily mean she needs to be or desires to be 'female.' By imposing a more rigid understanding of gender as subordinate

⁶⁴⁴ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 93.

⁶⁴⁵ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 83.

to sex, the translation shifts the narrative toward a binary framework, diluting the source text's critique of normative and essentialist conceptions of identity.

Cleopatra's gender queerness defies the binary system, unapologetically incorporating traditional symbols of the male body into her expression of femininity. Her proud self-identification as a 'chick,' coupled with her celebratory reference to her phallus ('la mejor mina y la poronga más grande del conurbano bonaerense') adds layers of complexity to her identity.⁶⁴⁶ This bold assertion challenges conventional expectations and underscores the multifaceted nature of her queerness. Equally central to Cleopatra's character is her unapologetic pride in her sexuality, which consistently subverts societal norms. Yet, in translation, this characterisation is further softened or negotiated, altering the impact of her subversive identity:

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Frances Riddle
[...] vos, que bien que te calentastes conmigo viendo bien de cerca lo puta que era, no me podés venir con estas pelotudeces ahora, corazón [...] ⁶⁴⁷	You wanted me even after you saw firsthand the whore I was, so don't come to me with this crap now, dear [...] ⁶⁴⁸

In this section, Cleopatra addresses Qüity, referencing the attraction Qüity felt toward her upon witnessing her explicit sexuality. The translation introduces a subtle yet impactful negative connotation by using the phrase 'even after,' implying that Qüity was attracted to Cleopatra despite her behaviour, as though that behaviour might detract from her appeal. This framing positions Cleopatra's sexuality as potentially undesirable or off-putting,

⁶⁴⁶ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 78; Translation: the best chick and the biggest dick in the whole of greater Buenos Aires; Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 68.

⁶⁴⁷ Cabezón Cámara, *La Virgen Cabeza*, p. 19.

⁶⁴⁸ Cabezón Cámara, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Riddle, p. 12.

creating a tension that undermines her agency and contradicts the effect of the source text. In contrast, the source text suggests that it is precisely Cleopatra's sexuality that arouses Qüity. This divergence underscores how translation choices can shape narrative tone: the translated version engages with narratives of slut-shaming, framing Cleopatra's behaviour as something to be tolerated, whereas the source text portrays her as a figure of empowerment and desirability, boldly claiming her sexuality and her work. By doing so, the source text presents Cleopatra as a proud, self-possessed character, with her sexuality serving as a source of power rather than shame.

As seen in this section, Cleopatra's complexity invites a deeper analysis of the translation, revealing the resistances, opportunities, and gaps that emerge in her migration to Riddle's version. This process underscores the challenges of addressing the marginalisation of the *travesti* identity on both national and international levels, while also highlighting how translation can serve as a space for redefining boundaries, or, in this case, for withholding a full introduction of the term *travesti* to Anglophone readers and subtly undermining the formulation of transness as well as sexual empowerment from the source text. Moreover, translation can operate in multiple ways: as a stabiliser of normativity when it fails to critically engage with its content; as a subversive force that disrupts normative frameworks by introducing marginalised communities and exposing oppressive dynamics; or, as in Riddle's translation, as a negotiated middle ground. In this case, subversion is adapted to remain accessible to the target audience, balancing the challenge of confronting norms with the need for comprehension, and in some cases a great approximation to the source text's ontology and, in others, an undermining of the ontology represented in the source text. Cleopatra's translinguistic migration is not merely a literary transgression but a transnational one, offering a compelling case study in intersectionality and subversive potential. It challenges hegemonic structures and interrogates what constitutes marginalised identities within the target culture, while raising important questions about the role of translation in shaping or silencing those identities.

6. Conclusions

Throughout this thesis, identity and power have been central, shaping the analysis of how literature and translation negotiate marginalised subjectivities. As introduced at the beginning, these negotiations are understood through a framework of literary entanglement, where multiplicity and relationality between the texts are directly connected to the production of meaning within this project. In other words, literary analysis of all the texts involved in this thesis is inseparable from comparative analysis, as both are treated as significant sites where power dynamics between narrator and narrated and dominant and marginalised identities are articulated and contested. Rather than placing one text as subordinate to another, this project has presented the texts as nodes within a dynamic system whose meanings emerge relationally and are shaped by linguistic, cultural and interpretative aspects, and which all approximate to an unattainable in-between imaginary text. Through the analysis of *A Hora da Estrela* and *The Hour of the Star*, *How to be Both* and *Com Ser-ho Alhora*, and *La Virgen Cabeza* and *Slum Virgin*, the study has shown how literary and translational techniques frame characters who are marginalised by identity, social circumstance, and literary positioning, as narrated subjects under the authority of narrators and as figures constrained by gendered expectations, as well as their subversion and challenge to these dynamics. These analyses have further highlighted how cultural specificity, and literary experimentation can expose and destabilise dominant power structures, revealing tensions around linguistic representation, cultural portrayal, and the expectations of the literary market. This concluding chapter now returns to the research questions to articulate the findings and assess their broader implications.

The power dynamics outlined above are first examined in this thesis in Lispector's *A Hora da Estrela*, with the following research question:

- How do *A Hora da Estrela* and *The Hour of the Star* explore identity and power dynamics through a psycholinguistic feminist lens?

Clarice Lispector's *A Hora da Estrela* depicts a deliberate subversion of gendered narrative dynamics by staging a patriarchal man narrator (an archetype of the intellectual) writing the life of a marginalised woman. This metafictional configuration has been demonstrated to destabilise the patriarchal mechanism of 'othering' by exposing the co-dependent structure that underpins such hierarchical relations. The novel reveals that the construction of the 'One' over the 'Other' is not autonomous or unilateral but reliant on the continual presence and narration of the subaltern subject. In this sense, Lispector foregrounds the instability of the projection system central to patriarchal epistemology, illustrating how power dynamics are not self-sustaining but always mediated through their dependency to a counterpart. The narrative's ultimate resolution then, where both narrator and protagonist die as the narrative continues, signals a radical critique of the heteropatriarchal symbolic

order. Obliteration becomes the condition for liberation, potentially in a celebratory gesture, while also suggesting the untenability of a system that requires a relationality between individuals, and which does not impose the power dynamic roles of dominance and subservience. The death of the narrated subject marks the end of her objectification, but also implicates the narrator's responsibility of it, collapsing the dichotomy of power and dependency. In doing so, Lispector critiques the gender 'binary' not merely as a social structure but as a narrative logic of narrator-narrated, exposing its foundational vulnerability through its own linguistic articulation. This narrative resolution is also understood as a form of collapse (here referencing the title of the thesis), where the collapse signals both the falling apart of a system and the sudden failure of a structure that can no longer sustain its internal logic. This collapse in the novel signals the thematic dismantling of patriarchal narrative authority and of the projecting system between the reader and the narrated and highlights the thesis' positioning on meaning not being fixed but instead actualised through the collapse of interpretative possibility.

Within feminist and queer theoretical frameworks, the novel stands out for its semiotic resistance to normative configurations of power. Its significance lies not only in its thematic concern with class, poverty, and gender marginalisation, but also in its formal experimentation. The refusal of narrative closure, and the co-termination of narrator and character, resist the conventions of realist fiction and open a speculative space for alternative modes of being and knowing. In other words, the novel invites readers to interrogate how language structures subjectivity and mediates relations of power, while simultaneously critiquing the limits of those very structures. Nevertheless, the text remains constrained by the binary logic it seeks to unravel, operating from within. Its exploration of gendered linguistic violence and existential alienation offers a schematic resolution that may inadvertently obscure more complex, intersectional realities by not observing them. In this regard, the text reflects certain tendencies of first- and second-wave feminist discourses, particularly within white, middle-class traditions, which have often been critiqued for their universalising assumptions and limited engagement with the multiplicity of marginalised subject positions. Between both translations of *A Hora da Estrela*, significant divergences emerge, particularly in the case of Pontiero's version, which frequently attenuates the novel's subversive strategies. In contrast, Moser's later translation demonstrates a closer alignment with the source text's experimental form, employing a strategy that reproduces its destabilising effects while foregrounding the constructed nature of the translation itself. Moser's deployment of paratextual elements, such as a scan of the manuscript's list of titles and an introduction, functions metatextually, guiding the reader's interpretative framework and reinforcing the self-reflexivity central to Lispector's narrative. Crucially, however, both translators feminise Macabéa to different degrees, shaping her subjectivity in ways that reinscribe passivity in the case of Pontiero, and which align her with feminine beauty standards, in the case of both. Such effects significantly alter the ontological representation of the Rodrigo-Macabéa dyad, in

this way each offering less radical versions of the imaginary text. A further limitation lies in the handling of ‘.Quando ao futuro.’, where neither translation preserves Lispector’s full stops despite the narrator explicitly identifying them as a feminist strategy of boundary-setting. In this way, *A Hora da Estrela* stages a feminist critique of narrative authority and a collapse of interpretative certainty, as it highlights through its use of full-stops in ‘.Quando ao futuro.’ for example the reader’s role in collapsing the possibilities of a text into a singular meaning, foregrounding the limits of language as a stable mediator of meaning, identity, and ultimately, power.

This contrast in translational approach may be partially attributed to the differing professional identities and institutional positions of the translators: Pontiero, an academic who approached translation as a supplementary pursuit, and Moser, a professional writer and translator whose engagement with Lispector’s work is marked by both specialisation and authorial investment. Moreover, the literary and historical contexts in which each translator operated significantly shaped their strategies. Pontiero’s translation was produced at a time when Lispector’s work remained largely unknown in the UK literary market, positioning him as a cultural mediator introducing a marginalised author to an unfamiliar readership. Moser, by contrast, was working within an established reception context, addressing an American audience increasingly receptive to Lispector’s stylistic idiosyncrasies. This shift in audience familiarity not only allowed for greater flexibility but also encouraged a translation practice attuned to contemporary literary preferences and commercial considerations. Together, Pontiero and Moser’s approaches reveal the breath of translation strategies that a same text can create. Each translation demonstrates a distinct interaction with the source text, where the collapse of meaning is affected by cultural constraints and target audiences, amongst other aspects, and which signals to their entangled system of texts. This dynamics between text, translator, and context find a different expression in Ali Smith’s *How to Be Both*, where the narrative experimentation and questions of identity are embedded in the novel’s structure, this time with a central theme of ‘bothness.’

The concept of bothness aligns with the literary entanglement framework, where instead of resolving identity into stable taxonomies, it sustains multiplicity in its conception of gender identity, sexuality, temporality, and narrative authority. In the same way as in the analysis of *A Hora da Estrela*, *How to Be Both*’s meaning and power dynamics are analysed not as a single collapse, but through the competing tensions that resist cis-heteropatriarchal symbolic order in each text, which also signals to the literary entanglement of source and translated texts. To examine this, the second central research question posits:

- How do *How to be Both* and *Com Ser-ho Alhora* explore identity power dynamics through a poststructuralist feminist lens?

How to Be Both escalates the subversive project initiated by *A Hora da Estrela* by introducing an axis of queerness. In this case, it is articulated through Francescho's utilitarian experience of social transness, which emerges not from an identity experience, or in other words, not because he 'is a trans man,' but from a strategic engagement with historically contingent gender norms, or in other words because he 'needs to be a man.' His trans embodiment aligns with professional and artistic pursuits, reflecting a pragmatic navigation of gendered structures. Simultaneously, the text maintains a fluid portrayal of his bisexuality, further destabilising fixed categories of identity. The novel foregrounds the destabilising potential of trans subjectivities, not only in terms of gender norms and non-conformity but also through sexual dissidence. This layered queerness exceeds the limits of heteronormative expectations, which are often predicated on the alignment between cisnormativity and heterosexuality, and presenting a narrator who provides another 'economy of meaning.' The resolution of these tensions through the preservation of friendship suggests an alternative ethics of relationality, grounded in solidarity rather than normativity. The novel also shifts from an externalised mode of psychological projection to one of introjection, as both protagonists engage in embodied rituals that symbolically reproduce relevant aspects of their deceased mothers. This process functions as a form of mourning and subject formation, particularly in George's case, who must negotiate the cultural inscriptions of gendered roles such as 'mother' to reformulate her understanding of Carol. These labels are shown to be both socially constructed and affectively powerful, shaping the characters' self-understanding and modes of relationality. The narrative ultimately points toward a reconciliation with the person, out of the restrictions imposed by the relational label, foregrounding the performative social configuration of kinship and gendered expectations. In this way, the novel suggests a critique of the restrictive aspects of gendered roles and labels within society at large.

In contrast to the antagonistic resolution in *A Hora da Estrela*, this novel proposes a reorientation of power that is neither oppositional nor patriarchal. Instead of centring masculine authority as the site of patriarchal dominance, the novel reallocates narrative power to the 'daughter' figure. By occupying the dual role of narrator and by virtue of being alive, George becomes the agent who retroactively constructs the category of 'mother.' This inversion exposes the relational dependency inherent in identity categories: a mother exists through the recognition and narration of the child. Rather than resolving co-dependence through erasure, as in the earlier text, *How to Be Both* presents a temporal and directional negotiation of identity which can be understood through its constant subversion of temporality and sequence, such as by publishing two versions of the novel alternating order of narrations, narrating Carol after her death, and erasing divides by permeating Francescho's ghostly presence within George's narration. This relationality does not seek to escape binary structures but complicates them from within, unsettling the epistemological boundaries that render gender and kinship intelligible. However, the transfer of narrative agency to the daughter also

reveals a latent dependency within systems of power: just as the mother requires a child to assume her role, womanhood in Rodrigo's logic is constituted through its negation of maleness. Macabéa becomes a woman through Rodrigo's narrative imposition, while in *How to be Both*, George confers the status of 'mother' onto Carol, and Francescho's gender is constantly conferred by the different observers throughout the narrative. Thus, in both novels, the act of naming and narrating becomes central to the production of gendered and relational identities. Narrative authority is situated not only in the power to narrate, but in the capacity to assign and perform social roles, revealing how identity is always mediated through the collapsing ability of discourse.

The translation handles complex areas like wordplay and language-specific nuances competently. While it does not take creative risks, it demonstrates a tendency to expand on ambiguity in order to sustain the possibility of new interpretive avenues in a way that demonstrates adaptability to the linguistic and cultural complexity. Stylistically, it is characterised by an efficient effect of the invisibility of the translator, demonstrating an interest in a seamless experience for the reader that does not place emphasis in its quality as a translation. The cultural proximity between the source and target contexts, with shared cultural knowledge, may account for this more conservative approach. Most central is that Francescho's masculine performance is mediated in the translation in Catalan seamlessly, navigating the use of grammatical gender, a linguistic trait non-existent in the source language, as another tool to sustain Francescho's masculinity to perform his role as an artist. What emerges from this case is the way their cultural closeness has fostered a translation practice that prioritises invisibility and fluency, operating with established norms rather than disrupting them, while also revealing how the introduction of grammatical gender, potentially destabilising in a text that subverts cis-heteropatriarchal narratives, has been non-consequential, as it has neither undermined nor intensified the subversive messaging of the source text. The last case study in contrast unsettles this picture.

In *La Virgen Cabeza* and its English translation, *Slum Virgin*, the stakes are different: the novel insists on the visibility of marginalised voices through dialect, slang, and subversive linguistic practices. The third research question therefore is as follows:

- How do *La Virgen Cabeza* and *Slum Virgin* explore themes of identity power dynamics through an intersectional feminist lens?

La Virgen Cabeza is the most radical exponent of the dynamics explored throughout this thesis, taking the spectrum presented of case studies to its most challenging source text. Cleopatra's narrative directly challenges cisheteronormative expectations: while Qüity, the dominant narrator, presents gender through the lens of linear transition, Cleopatra subverts this model by asserting a trans ontology in which she has always been a woman, including before social and medical transitions. In

other words, she challenges the notion of a ‘before’ and ‘after’ coming out, exposing the limitations of such frameworks and proposes another economy of meaning, one rooted in queer temporalities and non-linear forms of identity, as for example her transness is immutable, and her sexuality evolves throughout the novel. Her dynamic with Qüity reveals Cleopatra’s trans* identity, as after their sexual encounter Cleopatra self-defines as a ‘reborn lesbian,’ while Qüity, who enters the novel as heterosexual, discovers her bisexuality through their relationship. In this way, both protagonists’ identities subvert normative expectations and function as a destabilising force within their bond. Transness here disrupts the central logics of cis-heteronormativity, simultaneously undermining its structures and revealing an alternative economy of meaning, one shaped relationally and open to fluid change rather than fixed by monolithic labels. The novel also stages this negotiation structurally, dividing the narrative between Qüity, the dominant narrator and master of the written form, and Cleopatra, who presents her knowledge through oral tradition. In their interplay, the text enacts a feminist and intersectional alliance: Qüity’s narration creates space for Cleopatra to inscribe her ontological experience, while also preserving the tensions and contradictions that emerge from their divergent positionalities. Yet this is not a perfect process as Cleopatra’s account is transcribed by Qüity demonstrating once again the role of the intellectual as presented in *A Hora da Estrela*, as well as the distribution of space clearly favouring the intellectual within the duo. Still, what results is not a resolution but a dialogic practice of resistance, where marginalised voices contest narrative authority and destabilise normative categories of gender, sexuality, and class.

Cleopatra’s *travesti* identity, a term often used pejoratively both in her time and today, encapsulates a culturally placed identity that is non-mappable to the Anglophone audience, and which clearly presents a great challenge to the translation. Instead of retaining the term, the translation disperses it into a variety of labels for the *travesti* community of the *villa miseria*, each carrying different expectations for readers unfamiliar with the label. This strategy undermines the ontology of *travesti* as presented by the narrative, which combines performance and ontological experience of transness, and which instead, in the translation is unstable, oscillating between terms that highlight performance such as drag queens and transvestites, to gender identity terms such as trans, to even slurs such as ‘tranny.’ This dynamic strategy has a twofold effect, on one hand it adapts to the shifting effects of the novel, sustaining the epistemological violence that the narrator, an outsider of the community, already enacts in her narration; and on the other hand, it weakens the novel’s central theme of community and solidarity. In the source text, the term *travesti* acts as unifying category of struggle against normative expectations and structures, whereas in the translation this cohesion is linguistically fractured in adaptable and familiar labels within the target culture. This fragmentation exemplifies difference in the entangled system, where the source text presents a cohesive, politically charged ontology, and the translation disperses this multiplicity across unstable categories. The translator’s approach to racial discourse stands in sharp contrast to this. The

controversial term *negro*, which similar to *travesti*, is a pejorative term historically and today, designates in the case of the novel both racial identity and poverty within the Argentinian context. In translation, however, it has been conveyed largely through its poverty connotations, reflecting potential sensitivities in the US literary market. While this choice highlights the novel's central concern with socio-economic class, it diminishes the intersectional weight of race, revealing how the translation prioritises market linguistic sensibilities around race while showing less sensitivity toward queerness. This imbalance exposes the different levels of attention and negotiation applied to categories of race and queerness in the translation process and reveals a specific asymmetry in the portrayal of the identity labels.

Overall, each case study presents different feminist strategies of subversion and challenge in their literary form: *A Hora da Estrela* offers obliteration as freedom, *How to Be Both* proposes acceptance and introjection, and *La Virgen Cabeza* centres communal resistance. Collectively, they map a spectrum of feminist and queer approaches to resisting hegemonic power dynamics, offering insights of transnational relevance with the potential to represent and also introduce alternative economies of meaning in their migration to new contexts. Presented together, these source and translation texts form an entangled system that presents strategies of resistance without converging into a single model. In the same way, the analysis of this thesis has resisted convergence into a unified outcome and instead analysed, preserved, and presented their relational tensions as analytically productive, sustaining the project's commitment to multiplicity over singular resolutions. These works highlight oppressive systems, the power of language, and the break with traditional form. The translations analysed also demonstrate a range of techniques aimed at conveying different effects, and which, similar to the source texts, have demonstrated an interest in the subversiveness of their narratives. The translation techniques analysed illustrate how certain so-called 'feminist techniques' in Feminist Translation Studies, though not inherently feminist, can be made feminist depending on their intention and effect, opening up opportunities for innovation and experimentation. At the same time, translation analysis proves to be a valuable tool for identifying culturally specific sensitivities. This is evident, for instance, in *La Virgen Cabeza's* careful handling of the word *negro*, contrasted with its dynamic and adaptive treatment of queer terminology. This contrast is particularly relevant when the protagonist's identity is not mappable unto the receiving culture, raising important questions about translatability and representation. These findings suggest a direction that, although existent, has the potential for great expansion in the forthcoming years in Translation Studies: the translator's approach to queerness in translation. This is a growing area of interest, and it holds significant potential for advancing both theoretical and practical discussions in the field.

Some considerations must be made regarding the scope of the research presented in this thesis, as a limiting characteristic. On an epistemological level, future research could centre frameworks

from marginalised cultural spaces, and apply them to cases from hegemonic contexts, thereby reversing the traditional flow of theoretical production and challenging the hegemonic epistemic paradigms. Given the scope of the case studies, further dedicated research could also analyse particular translation target markets and their patterns. To examine a wide spectrum of texts with close attention to literary content and offer a variety of directionalities, this project has chosen not to focus on nation-specific or language-specific phenomena, nor to centre a single cultural identity. This trade-off, however, opens valuable opportunities for further research, particularly in the literary dissemination of marginalised identities and subversive power dynamics. For example, this study notes that the US translation *Slum Virgin*, appears racially sensitive but less sensitive to LGBTQ+ representation; thus, further examining cases around these topics have the potential to identify patterns and their relation to socio-political events. What this project offers instead is a broader perspective: it steps back to examine how the written word functions in different contexts, as the texts reveal and challenge dominant power structures and normative identities. These literary works not only educate readers about possibilities for resistance but also expose the cultural particularities of marginalised experiences, raising opportunities for alliances of mutual understanding such as *A Hora da Estrela*'s subversion of patriarchal oppression which is mappable to other patriarchal contexts such as the US and the UK, or *La Virgen Cabeza*'s cultural specificity which raises the opportunity for the audience to understand racial and queer intersectionalities of struggle to a US audience. They demonstrate how identities and dynamics of oppression are constructed, and how the self is, in many ways, already 'translated' into language, as source text and translated text become entangled with a third imaginary text. Just as characters are mediated by narrators, marginalised figures are often filtered and reshaped through narration. Later, these narratives are again translated into new cultural and linguistic contexts, in a constant cycle of subjectification and mediation. The diversity of texts selected for this project reveal the nuances of these dynamics. Rather than simplifying the relationship into a binary of oppressor and oppressed, these works offer complex portrayals that highlight variation and intersectionality, and which subvert this simplistic approach, revealing instead complexity and ambiguity.

It is in this timely manner, as for example Judith Butler acknowledges how translation plays a central role in Gender Studies, that this thesis follows suit highlighting precisely the unmappable and mappable of alterity and its cultural specificity.⁶⁴⁹ It is situated within the broadness of scholarly

⁶⁴⁹ Judith Butler, 'Gender in Translation: Beyond Monolingualism', *philoSOPHIA*, 9.1 (2019), pp. 1–25.

work that has undoubtedly connected Gender Theory to Translation Studies, a conversation which began in the 20th century, yet one that remains pressing today. This project seeks to that conversation by examining translation in ways that invite broader academic communities to engage with the insights of Translation Studies. Recent developments in Translation Studies, as discussed in the Literature Review, have seen a growing interest in diversifying research, from corpus-based research to micro- and macro-historical studies of individual figures and culturally specific contexts. While many of these studies are grounded in particular historical moments, this project deliberately diverges. Instead, it investigates the potential of literature and translation to question the notion of universal practices and highlights its potential for feminist impact. By focusing on broad societal dynamics, those that manifest wherever inequality persists, this research uncovers repeating patterns of oppression and their unique subversions across different texts. This approach demonstrates how authors confront normativity and how translators negotiate subversion. Ultimately, the authors selected in this study are united by their commitment to representing non-normative and non-dominant positions, challenging oppressive social dynamics as their work empathetically explores the restrictions and consequences of these experiences. By engaging with these questions, this study contributes to the understanding of how translation functions as a tool for transnational cultural conversations, resistance, and representation and highlights the central role of translation in shaping narratives and disseminating feminist and queer subversion. More importantly, it advocates for translation strategies that are attuned to ethical considerations and the needs of marginalised voices, and which remain at their core dynamic and adaptive. Through identifying effective techniques and pinpointing gaps in current practice, this research calls for inclusive, thoughtful, and socially engaged translation and literary productions. The goal is to broaden the reach of underrepresented perspectives and to promote literary practices that foster cultural diversity and contribute to social justice.

On a personal note,

This small section departs from the rigidity of academic form and for that, I hope that my reader can do so too, for these words are written with warm hands.

This research looked for empowerment and subversion in literature, which took me on a personal journey. I have evolved because of it, with it, through it. I live in another country than the one I grew up in, and I live my every day in translation. Even as a child, when I translated myself into language, one not spoken at home, but at school, the words fell flat, as I pursued the shadows that never came. As I grew, daughter of outsiders, mixing languages, I found more and more words in which not to find myself, and more and more eyes that looked but did not see, and so, I was translated.

This research has helped me intellectualise, emotionally explore, and linguistically place what this experience is. That I am, in translation at heart. It is in this research, and how this thesis translates to the reader's eyes findings and who I am, partially, never completely. In many ways I'm in the symbolic, normative and dominant, in many ways I am not to be found there, and through this ambiguous understanding of who I am, in relation to others, in relation to 'me,' and how I am in migration, that has let me flourish; feel seen, if not represented, accompanied, hand in hand. In a way, these works highlight my genealogy of mothers, as I kneeled in the very womb of their texts, of the translations, and I drank each word, not knowing of a thirst that had always clenched my soul.

I marvelled at Cleopatra's rebirth, I soaked in Francescho's art, I began in Clarice's yes.

And for these texts, source and translated, I will be forever grateful.

7. Bibliography

‘01/07/2016 - Americano Que Biografou Clarice Recebe Prêmio Itamaraty de Diplomacia Cultural’, *Revista Museu: Cultura Levada a Sério*, n.d.
 <<https://www.revistamuseu.com.br/site/br/noticias/nacionais/695-01-07-2016-americano-que-biografou-clarice-recebe-premio-itamaraty-de-diplomacia-cultural.html>> [accessed 13 August 2024]

‘Ableism, n.,’ *Oxford English Dictionary*
 <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/ableism_n> [accessed 2 February 2023]

‘About,’ *Charco Press* <<https://charcopress.com/about>> [accessed 5 November 2024]

‘Brazilian Academy of Letters | Academic Society | Britannica,’ *Britannica*
 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Brazilian-Academy-of-Letters>> [accessed 13 August 2024]

‘Carcanet Press: About Us’ <<https://www.carcanet.co.uk/cgi-bin/scribe?showinfo=ip020>> [accessed 7 December 2023]

‘Grup d’Estudi de La Traducció Catalana Contemporània,’ *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* <<https://webs.uab.cat/getcc/en/>> [accessed 9 September 2024]

‘New Direction Publishing: About Us’ <<https://www.ndbooks.com/about/>> [accessed 7 December 2023]

‘The Goldsmiths Prize 2014,’ *Goldsmiths, University of London*
 <<https://www.gold.ac.uk/goldsmiths-prize/prize2014/>> [accessed 10 November 2022]

‘Transvestite,’ *Cambridge Dictionary*, 10 April 2024
 <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/transvestite>>

‘Utilitarianism’, Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus, 11 September 2024 <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/utilitarianism>> [accessed 6 January 2023]

Agamben, Giorgio, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. by Daniel Heller-Roazen, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford University Press, 1999)

Alencar, Maria Eduarda dos Santos, and Rosvitha Friesen Blume, ‘Mulheres Traduzindo Literatura No Brasil Nos Séculos XIX e XX,’ *Ciência & Trópico*, 39.1 (2015), pp. 97–115

Allende, Isabel, *Violeta*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022)

Altbach, Philip G., ‘Globalization and the University: Realities in an Unequal World,’ in *International Handbook of Higher Education*, ed. by James J. F. Forest and Philip G. Altbach (Springer Netherlands, 2007), pp. 121–39, doi:[10.1007/978-1-4020-4012-2_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-4012-2_8)

Althusser, Louis, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (Monthly Review Press, 2002) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=2081662>>

Ancalao, Liliana, ‘El Idioma Silenciado’, in Karina Bidaseca, *Feminismos y poscolonialidad* (Godot, 2022), pp. 121–26

Anderson, Veanne N., ‘What Does Transgender Mean to You? Transgender Definitions and Attitudes toward Trans People: Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity,’ *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 10.4 (2023), pp. 600–12, doi:[10.1037/sgd0000566](https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000566)

Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume Two: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes, trans. by W. D. Ross (Princeton University Press, 1984) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=1632631>> [accessed 14 August 2025]

Armbruster, Carol, 'Hélène-Clarice: Nouvelle Voix', *Contemporary Literature*, 24.2 (1983), pp. 145–57, doi:[10.2307/1208101](https://doi.org/10.2307/1208101)

Arruzza, Cinzia, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser, *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto* (Verso, 2019)

Auyero, Javier, 'Performing Evita: A Tale of Two Peronist Women,' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 27.4 (1999), pp. 461–93, doi:[10.1177/089124199129023307](https://doi.org/10.1177/089124199129023307)

Bacardí, Montserrat, and Pilar Godayol, 'Catalan Women Translators: An Introductory Overview,' *The Translator*, 20.2 (2014), pp. 144–61, doi:[10.1080/13556509.2014.968327](https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2014.968327)

Bacardí, Montserrat, and Pilar Godayol, eds., *Diccionari de la Traducció Catalana* (Eumo Editorial SAU, 2011)

Baer, Brian James, and Klaus Kaindl, eds., *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer: Theory, Practice, Activism* (Routledge, 2017), doi:[10.4324/9781315505978](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315505978)

Baer, Brian James, and Serena Bassi, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Sexuality* (Routledge, 2024), doi:[10.4324/9780429462962](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429462962)

Baer, Brian James, *Queer Theory and Translation Studies: Language, Politics, Desire* (Routledge, 2020), doi:[10.4324/9781315514734](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315514734)

Baker, Mona, 'Translation as an Alternative Space for Political Action,' *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest*, 12.1 (2013), pp. 23–47 <<https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/jrul/item/?pid=uk-ac-man-scw:160959>>

Baker, Mona, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (Routledge, 2006)

Bakhtin, Mikhail M., *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (University of Texas Press, 1981)

Baklanoff, Eric N., 'External Factors in the Economic Development of Brazil's Heartland: The Center-South, 1850-1930,' in *The Shaping of Modern Brazil*, ed. by Eric N. Baklanoff, Colloquium on the Modernization of Brazil, Baton Rouge, LA (Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 19–35

Balcázar, Melina, 'Traducir la violencia. La "ley de la mayoría" en la traducción al francés de *Las malas*, de Camila Sosa Villada, y *La virgen cabeza*, de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' *Mutatis Mutandis. Revista Latinoamericana de Traducción*, 16.1 (2023), pp. 73–87, doi:[10.17533/udea.mut/v16n1a05](https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.mut/v16n1a05)

Ballan, Joseph, 'Divine Anonymities: On Transascendence and Transdescendence in the Works of Levinas, Celan, and Lispector,' *Religion and the Arts*, 12.4 (2008), pp. 540–58, doi:[10.1163/156852908X357380](https://doi.org/10.1163/156852908X357380)

Barbosa, Heloísa Gonçalves, 'The Virtual Image: Brazilian Literature in English Translation' (unpublished PhD, University of Warwick, 1994) <<http://webcat.warwick.ac.uk/record=b1417027~S1>>

Barthes, Roland, 'The Death of the Author,' in Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath, Fontana Communications Series (Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142–48

Berkins, Lohana, 'Panel Sexualidades Contemporáneas: "Travestis: Una Identidad Política"' (presented at the VIII Jornadas Nacionales de Historia de las Mujeres/ III Congreso Iberoamericano de Estudios de Género DiferenciaDesigualdad. Construirnos en la diversidad, Córdoba, Spain, 2006) <<https://hemisphericinstitute.org/es/emisferica-42/4-2-review-essays/lohana-berkins.html>>

Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Warner, 'Sex in Public,' *Critical Inquiry*, 24.2 (1998), pp. 547–66 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1344178>>

Berman, Antoine, *La traduction et la lettre, ou, L'auberge du lointain* (Éditions du Seuil, 1999)

Bozkurt, Sinem, “‘Touched’ Translations in Turkey: A Feminist Translation Approach’, *Moment Dergi*, 1.1 (2014), pp. 104–24, art. 1, doi:[10.17572/moment.396579](https://doi.org/10.17572/moment.396579)

Bozzano, Caroline Betemps, ‘Feminismos transnacionais descoloniais: Algumas questões em torno da colonialidade nos feminismos,’ *Revista Estudos Feministas*, 27 (2019), p. e58972, doi:[10.1590/1806-9584-2019v27n158972](https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-9584-2019v27n158972)

Bracke, Maud Anne, Penelope Morris, and Emily Ryder, ‘Introduction. Translating Feminism: Transfer, Transgression, Transformation (1950s–1980s),’ *Gender & History*, 30.1 (2018), pp. 214–25, doi:[10.1111/1468-0424.12358](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12358)

Brooke-Rose, Christine, *The Christine Brooke-Rose Omnibus: Four Novels: Out, Such, Between, Thru* (Carcanet Press, Limited, 2007)

Brophy, Brigid, *In Transit: An Heroi-Cyclic Novel* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2002)

Bruckner, Pascal, and Alain Finkielkraut, *El Nuevo Desorden Amoroso*, trans. by J. Jordá (Editorial Anagrama S.A., 1979)

Butler, Judith, ‘Gender in Translation: Beyond Monolingualism’, *philoSOPHIA*, 9.1 (2019), pp. 1–25

Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 2011), doi:[10.4324/9780203824979](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824979)

Cámara, Gabriela Cabezón, *Las Aventuras de China Iron* (Random House, 2019)

Cabezón Cámara, Gabriela, *La Virgen Cabeza* (Eterna Cadencia, 2009)

Cabezón Cámara, Gabriela, *Slum Virgin*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Charco Press, 2017)

Cabral (A.I. Grinspan), Mauro, and Paula Viturro, ‘(Trans)Sexual Citizenship in Contemporary Argentina’, in *Transgender Rights*, ed. by Paisley Currah, Richard M. Juang, and Shannon Minter (University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp. 262–73

Carlson, Marifran, *¡Feminismo!: The Woman's Movement in Argentina From Its Beginnings to Eva Perón* (Academy Chicago Publishers, 1988)

Carrera, Elena, 'The Reception of Clarice Lispector via Hélène Cixous: Reading from the Whale's Belly,' in *Brazilian Feminisms*, ed. by Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira and Judith Still (University of Nottingham, 1999), pp. 85–100

Castro, Olga, 'Talking at Cross-Purposes? The Missing Link between Feminist Linguistics and Translation Studies,' *Gender & Language*, 6.2 (2012), pp. 35–58, doi:[10.1558/genl.v7i1.35](https://doi.org/10.1558/genl.v7i1.35)

Castro, Olga, and María Laura Spoturno, 'Feminismos y Traducción: Apuntes Conceptuales y Metodológicos Para Una Traductología Feminista Transnacional,' *Mutatis Mutandis. Revista Latinoamericana de Traducción*, 13.1 (2020), pp. 11–44, doi:[10.17533/udea.mut.v13n1a02](https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.mut.v13n1a02)

Cervantes, Verónica Alejandra de la Torre, 'Indicios de una herencia dialógica. Análisis comparativo de la Nueva Narrativa Argentina en dos cuentos de Samanta Schweblin y Mariana Enríquez,' *Redoma*, 1.3 (2022), pp. 35–35, doi:[10.48778/redoma.v1i3.1264](https://doi.org/10.48778/redoma.v1i3.1264)

Chiquito, Ana Beatriz, and Miguel Ángel Quesada Pacheco, 'Introducción,' *Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies*, 5 (2014), doi:[10.15845/bells.v5i0.667](https://doi.org/10.15845/bells.v5i0.667)

Cixous, Hélène, 'Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays,' in *The Newly Born Woman*, by Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, trans. by Betsy Wing (University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 63–132

Cixous, Hélène, 'The Author in Truth,' in *'Coming to Writing' and Other Essays*, by Hélène Cixous, ed. by Deborah Jenson, trans. by Sarah Cornell (Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 136–81

Cixous, Hélène, 'The Laugh of the Medusa,' trans. by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs*, 1.4 (1976), pp. 875–93

Collins, Patricia Hill, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd edn (Routledge, 1990), doi:[10.4324/9780203900055](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203900055)

Connell, Raewyn, *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science* (Polity, 2007)

Costa, Claudia de Lima, 'Feminist Theories, Transnational Translations, and Cultural Mediations', in *Translocalities/Translocalidades: Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Americas*, ed. by Sonia E. Alvarez and others (Duke University Press, 2014), pp. 133–48

Costa, Claudia de Lima, 'Lost (and Found?) In Translation: Feminisms in Hemispheric Dialogue,' *Latino Studies*, 4.1 (2006), pp. 62–78, doi:[10.1057/palgrave.lst.8600185](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.lst.8600185)

Crenshaw, Kimberlé, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,' *Stanford Law Review*, 43.6 (1991), pp. 1241–99, doi:[10.2307/1229039](https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039)

Crovara, María Eugenia, 'Pobreza y Estigma En Una Villa Miseria Argentina,' *Política y Cultura*, no. 22 (2004), pp. 29–45
<http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_abstract&pid=S0188-77422004000200003&lng=es&nrm=iso&tlng=es>

Cuiñas, Ana Gallego, 'Comienzos de La Novísima Novela Argentina (2001-2011),' *Hispanamérica*, 44.130 (2015), pp. 3–14 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43684417>>

Dean, Warren, 'Economy,' in Leslie Bethell, *Brazil: Empire and Republic, 1822-1930* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 217–57

Deane-Cox, Sharon, *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014)

del Cossa, Francesco, 'Saint Lucy by Francesco Del Cossa,' c. /1474 1473
<<https://www.nga.gov/artworks/369-saint-lucy>>

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Theory and History of Literature (University of Minnesota Press), v. 30 (University of Minnesota Press, 1986)

Deleuze, Gilles, 'Literature and Life', trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, *Critical Inquiry*, 23.2 (1997), pp. 225–30, doi:[10.1086/448827](https://doi.org/10.1086/448827)

Derrida, Jacques, 'Violence et Métaphysique: Essai Sur La Pensée d'Emmanuel Levinas,' *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 69.3 (1964), pp. 322–54
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40900827>>

Domínguez Rubalcava, Héctor, *Translating the Queer: Body Politics and Transnational Conversations* (Zed Books, 2016)

Domínguez, Nora, 'Conversaciones y reenvíos con Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' *Cuadernos LIRICO. Revista de la red interuniversitaria de estudios sobre las literaturas rioplatenses contemporáneas en Francia*, no. 10 (2014), pp. 1–6, doi:[10.4000/lirico.1653](https://doi.org/10.4000/lirico.1653)

Drucaroff, Elsa, *Los Prisioneros de la Torre: Política, Relatos y Jóvenes en la Postdictadura* (Emecé, 2011)

Ellmann, Mary, *Thinking about Women* (Virago, 1979)

Emek Ergun, 'Social, Medical, and Legal Control of Female Sexuality through Construction of Virginity in Turkey' (unpublished, Towson University, 2006)
<<http://archive.org/details/ConstructionofVirginityTurkey>> [accessed 30 July 2025]

Enns, Carolyn Zerbe, Lillian Comas Díaz, and Thema Bryant-Davis, 'Transnational Feminist Theory and Practice: An Introduction', *Women & Therapy*, 44.1–2 (2021), pp. 11–26, doi:[10.1080/02703149.2020.1774997](https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2020.1774997)

Epps, Brad, 'Los "Fráxitos" de la Disidencia Sexual en la Época de la Globalización Neoliberal,' *Mora*, no. 24 (2018), pp. 143–52, doi:[10.34096/mora.n24.6310](https://doi.org/10.34096/mora.n24.6310)

Epps, Brad, 'Retos, Riesgos, Pautas y Promesas de la Teoría Queer,' *Revista Iberoamericana*, 74.225 (2008), pp. 897–920, doi:[10.5195/reviberoamer.2008.5216](https://doi.org/10.5195/reviberoamer.2008.5216)

Ergun, Emek, and Olga Castro, eds., *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives* (Routledge, 2017), doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624)

Ergun, Emek, *Virgin Crossing Borders: Feminist Resistance and Solidarity in Translation*, Transformations: Womanist, Feminist, and Indigenous Studies (University of Illinois Press, 2023)

Esposito, Scott, 'Passionate Acolytes: An Interview with Benjamin Moser', 17 August 2015 <<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/08/17/passionate-acolytes-an-interview-with-benjamin-moser/>> [accessed 15 February 2022]

Esteves, Lenita Maria Rimoli, 'A Presença Da Literatura Brasileira No Exterior e a Importância Do Agenciamento: Uma Análise Guiada Por Conceitos Da Sociologia de Pierre Bourdieu,' *O Eixo e a Roda: Revista de Literatura Brasileira*, 25.1 (2016), pp. 9–36, doi:[10.17851/2358-9787.25.1.9-36](https://doi.org/10.17851/2358-9787.25.1.9-36)

Esteves, Lenita Maria Rimoli, 'Uma Discussão Sobre a Prática da Retradução com Base no Caso das Republicações de Obras de Clarice Lispector no Exterior', *Trabalhos em Linguística Aplicada*, 55 (2016), pp. 651–76, doi:[10.1590/010318138647117214021](https://doi.org/10.1590/010318138647117214021)

Eyre, Pilar, Pilar Eyre: 'La reina Sofia parla tan malament castellà perquè no el parla amb ningú' - Tot es mou, 6 March 2024 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2z2iPtosz-M>>

Fairclough, Norman, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Language in Social Life Series (Longman, 1995)

Federici, Federico M., and Dario Tessicini (eds), *Translators, Interpreters, and Cultural Negotiators* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), doi:[10.1057/9781137400048](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137400048)

Feitlowitz, Marguerite, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture, Revised and Updated with a New Epilogue* (Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2011) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=665409>>

Felski, Rita, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Harvard University Press, 1989)

Fernández, Fruela, ‘Assessing Masculine Domination in a Cultural Field: Women Translators and Book Translation Awards in Spain (1984–2012),’ *The Translator*, 20.2 (2014), pp. 162–77, doi:[10.1080/13556509.2014.960649](https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2014.960649)

Ferree, Myra Marx, and Aili Mari Tripp (eds), *Global Feminism: Transnational Women’s Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights* (New York University Press, 2006)

Ferreira, Rony Márcio Cardoso, ‘A Hora Do Brasil De 70,’ *Travessias*, 2.1 (2008), pp. 1–8

Flotow, Luise von, ‘Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories,’ *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction*, 4.2 (1991), pp. 69–84, doi:[10.7202/037094ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/037094ar)

Flotow, Luise von, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the ‘Era of Feminism’* (Routledge, 1997)

Foucault, Michel, ‘A Preface to Transgression,’ in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, by Michel Foucault, ed. by James Faubion, trans. by Robert Hurley and others (Penguin Classics, 2020), pp. 69–87

Foucault, Michel, ‘Friendship As A Way Of Life,’ in *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1961-1984)*, by Michel Foucault, ed. by Sylvère Lotringer, trans. by John Johnson (Semiotext(e), 1996), pp. 308–12

Foucault, Michel, ‘What Is an Author?,’ in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 113–38

Foucault, Michel, *The Will to Knowledge*, trans. by Robert Hurley, *The History of Sexuality* (Penguin, 2019), I

Freeth, Peter J., and Rafael Treviño, *Beyond the Translator's Invisibility: Critical Reflections and New Perspectives* (Leuven University Press, 2024)

Frerichs, Emi, 'Towards a Travesti Subjectivity and System of Aesthetics: Trasheo Travesti, Irreverence, and Bold Visions for a New Humanity in Argentinean Literature and Culture,' *Chasqui*, 51.1 (2022), pp. 303–23 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27223727>>

Fricker, Miranda, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007), doi:[10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198237907.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198237907.001.0001)

Frigerio, Alejandro, 'Luis D'Elia y los negros: identificaciones raciales y de clase en los sectores populares,' *Claroscuro. Revista del Centro de Estudios sobre Diversidad Cultural*, 8.8 (2009), pp. 13–43 <<http://hdl.handle.net/2133/12016>>

Fry, Peter, 'Prefacio,' in *El Negocio Del Deseo: La Prostitución Masculina En San Pablo*, by Néstor Perlongher (Paidós, 1999), pp. 13–16

Furlan, Mauri, 'Retraduzir é preciso', *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 13 (August 2013), pp. 284–94, art. 13, doi:[10.5007/%2525x](https://doi.org/10.5007/%2525x)

Gambier, Yves, 'La retraduction, retour et détour', *Meta: journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 39.3 (1994), pp. 413–17, doi:[10.7202/002799ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/002799ar)

Genette, Gérard, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Yale University Press, 1984)

Godard, Barbara, 'Producing Visibility for Lesbians: Nicole Brossard's Quantum Poetics', *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 21.2 (1995), pp. 125–37

- Godard, Barbara, 'Theorizing Feminist Discourse / Translation,' *Tessera*, 6 (1989), pp. 42–52, doi:[10.25071/1923-9408.23583](https://doi.org/10.25071/1923-9408.23583)
- Godayol, Pilar, 'Three Feminist Classics in Catalan, Galician and Spanish: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Virginia Woolf and Betty Friedan,' *Women's Studies International Forum*, Rethinking Women and Translation in the Third Millennium, 42 (2014), pp. 77–86, doi:[10.1016/j.wsif.2013.06.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.06.001)
- Godayol, Pilar, 'Triplement Subalternes,' *Quaderns: Revista de Traducció*, 15 (2008), pp. 41–50 <<http://dspace.uvic.cat/xmlui/handle/10854/3111>>
- Godayol, Pilar, *Espais De Frontera: Gènere i Traducció* (Eumo, 2000)
- Godayol, Pilar, *Feminismos y Traducción (1965-1990)* (Punctum, 2020)
- Goldhaber, Michael H., 'The Attention Economy and the Net', *First Monday*, 2.4 (1997), doi:[10.5210/fm.v2i4.519](https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v2i4.519)
- Gramelius, Misha Campello, 'A Tradução Da Estrela: Exploring the Potential of Feminist Translation to Inform Research in Clarice Lispector's Novel.,' *Transcultural Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5.1 (2024), pp. 65–78, doi:[10.21608/tjhss.2024.255717.1226](https://doi.org/10.21608/tjhss.2024.255717.1226)
- Griffin, Nigel, 'Obituary: Giovanni Pontiero', *The Independent*, 11 March 1996 <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-giovanni-pontiero-1341546.html>> [accessed 11 February 2022]
- Halberstam, Jack, *Female Masculinity* (Duke University Press, 1998)
- Halberstam, Jack, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke University Press, 2011)
- Halberstam, Jack, *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability* (University of California Press, 2017)

Hall, Stuart, *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, ed. by Paul Gilroy and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Stuart Hall: Selected Writings (Duke University Press, 2021)

Halperin, David M., *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford University Press, 1995)

Hassan, Ihab, *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1982)

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Peter Fuss and John Dobbins (University of Notre Dame Press, 2019)

Henitiuk, Valerie, 'Translating Woman: Reading the Female through the Male', *Meta : Journal Des Traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 44.3 (1999), pp. 469–84, doi:[10.7202/003045ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/003045ar)

hooks, bell, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Pluto Press, 1982)

Irigaray, Luce, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cornell University Press, 1985)

Jiménez, Paula, 'Página/12: Soy, "Cabecita loca"' <<https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/soy/1-861-2009-07-10.html>> [accessed 29 September 2023]

Johnson, B. S., *The Unfortunates* (New Directions Publishing, 2007)

Justino, Luciano Barbosa, 'A Hora da Estrela: Por Uma Leitura Nordestina,' *Estudos de Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea*, 51 (2017), pp. 64–82, doi:[10.1590/2316-4018514](https://doi.org/10.1590/2316-4018514)

Keith, Victòria Alsina i, 'La Traducció de l'estil. The Waves, de Virginia Woolf, Traduït per Maria-Antònia Oliver,' *Quaderns: Revista de Traducció*, no. 21 (2014), pp. 85–105 <<https://www.raco.cat/index.php/QuadernsTraduccio/article/view/284074>>

Koskinen, Kaisa, *Translation and Affect: Essays on Sticky Affects and Translational Affective Labour* (Benjamins, 2020)

Kramsch, Claire, 'Language and Culture,' *AILA Review*, 27 (2014), pp. 30–55, doi:[10.1075/aila.27.02kra](https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.27.02kra)

Kristeva, Julia, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez, European Perspectives (Columbia University Press, 1989)

Kristeva, Julia, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (Columbia University Press, 1984)

Lacan, Jacques, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,' in *Reading French Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 2010)

Lea, Daniel, 'Ali Smith,' in *Twenty-First-Century Fiction: Contemporary British Voices*, ed. by Daniel Lea (Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 26–73, doi:[10.7228/manchester/9780719081491.003.0002](https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719081491.003.0002)

Levine, Suzanne Jill, *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction*, Dalkey Archive Scholarly Series, 1st Dalkey Archive ed (Dalkey Archive Press, 2009)

Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*, trans. by Felicity Baker (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987)

Li, Yuying, and Yuming Zhang, 'A Comparative Study of Novel Translation from the Perspective of Feminist Translation Theory: A Case Study of the Two Chinese Versions of Persuasion,' *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 9.7 (2019), pp. 785–89, doi:[10.17507/tpls.0907.05](https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0907.05)

Lindon, Mathieu, 'Clarice Lispector: Mission Secrète', *Libération*, 1989, pp. 21–22

Lispector, Clarice, *A Descoberta Do Mundo: Crônicas* (Relógio D'Água Editores, 2013)

Lispector, Clarice, *A Hora Da Estrela* (Rocco Ltda, 2019)

Lispector, Clarice, *Agua Viva*, ed. by Benjamin Moser, trans. by Stefan Tobler, Modern Classics (Penguin Classics, 2014)

Lispector, Clarice, *Discovering the World*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (Carcamet, 1992)

Lispector, Clarice, *Family Ties*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (University of Texas Press, 1997)

Lispector, Clarice, *Near to the Wild Heart*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (New Directions, 1990)

Lispector, Clarice, *The Foreign Legion*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (New Directions, 1992)

Lispector, Clarice, *The Hour of the Star*, trans. by Benjamin Moser (Penguin Books, 2014)

Lispector, Clarice, *The Hour of the Star*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (Carcamet Press, 1986)

Lispector, Clarice, and Pedro Almodóvar, *A Breath of Life (Pulsations)*, ed. by Benjamin Moser, trans. by Johnny Lorenz, A New Directions Book (New Directions, 2012)

Lorde, Audre, *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*, Penguin Modern, 23 (Penguin Books, 2018)

Lotbinière-Harwood, Susanne de, *Re-Belle et Infidèle: La Traduction Comme Pratique de Réécriture Au Féminin = The Body Bilingual: Translation as a Re-Writing in the Feminine* (Les éditions du remue-ménage ; Women's Press, 1991)

Lowe, Elizabeth, 'Revisiting Re-Translation: Re-Creation and Historical Re-Vision,' in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. by Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter, 1st edn (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), pp. 413–24, doi:[10.1002/9781118613504](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118613504)

Lugones, María, 'Colonialidad y género: hacia un feminismo descolonial', in *Género y descolonialidad*, ed. by Walter Mignolo, 2nd edn (Del Signo, 2014), pp. 13–42
<<http://www.marcialpons.es/libros/genero-y-descolonialidad/9789873784972/>> [accessed 4 July 2025]

Maradei, Guadalupe, 'Ficciones posdictadura: la trilogía oscura de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' in *Eventos del deseo*, ed. by Dieter Ingenschay (Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2018), pp. 123–40, doi:[10.31819/9783954876921-009](https://doi.org/10.31819/9783954876921-009)

Maristany, José Javier, 'Usos De La Voz Subalterna: Lesbianas Y Travestis En Dos Novelas Argentinas,' *Chasqui*, 45.1 (2016), pp. 116–29
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24810881>>

Marsack, Robyn, 'Discovering the Word', in Giovanni Pontiero, *The Translator's Dialogue: Giovanni Pontiero*, ed. by Pilar Orero and Juan C. Sager (John Benjamins Publishing, 1997), pp. 99–106

Martínez Expósito, Alfredo, *Escrituras Torcidas: Ensayos de Crítica 'Queer,'* Colección Rey de Bastos, 44 (Laertes, 2004)

Martínez Gil, Juan, 'El devenir queer de Cleopatra en La Virgen Cabeza de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' *Clepsydra. Revista de Estudios de Género y Teoría Feminista*, no. 17 (2018), pp. 11–26, doi:[10.25145/j.clepsydra.2018.17.01](https://doi.org/10.25145/j.clepsydra.2018.17.01)

Masters, Tim, 'Baileys Prize: Ali Smith Wins for How to Be Both,' *BBC News*, 3 June 2015, section Entertainment & Arts <<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-32995243>>

Mattioli, Virginia, 'The Influence of the Translation Tradition on the Construction of Identity: Analysis of the English Translation of Amereida,' *English Studies in Latin America: A Journal of Cultural and Literary Criticism*, no. 26 (2024), doi:[10.7764/ESLA.74749](https://doi.org/10.7764/ESLA.74749)

Meier, Tabea, and others, '(Not) Lost in Translation: Psychological Adaptation Occurs During Speech Translation,' *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 12.1 (2021), pp. 131–42, doi:[10.1177/1948550619899258](https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619899258)

Mignolo, Walter D., 'Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom,' *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26.7–8 (2009), pp. 159–81, doi:[10.1177/0263276409349275](https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275)

Mignolo, Walter D., *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton University Press, 2000)

Millett, Kate, *Sexual Politics* (Columbia University Press, 2016)

Mills, Sara, and Louise Mullany, *Language, Gender and Feminism: Theory, Methodology and Practice* (Routledge, 2011), doi:[10.4324/9780203814666](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203814666)

Milton, John, and Marie-Hélène Catherine Torres, 'Apresentação,' *Cadernos de Tradução*, 1.11 (2003), pp. 9–17, doi:[10.5007/%0x](https://doi.org/10.5007/%0x)

Moghadam, Valentine M., *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (Johns Hopkins University Press, c2005) <<https://hdl-handle-net.ezproxy2.lib.gla.ac.uk/2027/heb04730.0001.001>>

Moi, Toril, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, New Accents (Methuen & Co.) (Methuen, 1985)

Moser, Benjamin, 'Brazil's Clarice Lispector Gets a Second Chance in English', *Publishing Perspectives*, 2 December 2011 <<https://publishingperspectives.com/2011/12/brazil-claire-lispector-second-chance-in-english/>> [accessed 29 September 2022]

Mulac, Anthony, James J. Bradac, and Pamela Gibbons, 'Empirical Support for the Gender-as-Culture Hypothesis: An Intercultural Analysis of Male/Female Language

Differences,' *Human Communication Research*, 27.1 (2001), pp. 121–52,
doi:[10.1111/j.1468-2958.2001.tb00778.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2001.tb00778.x)

Mulvey, Laura, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' *Screen*, 16.3 (1975), pp. 6–18, doi:[10.1093/screen/16.3.6](https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6)

Namorato, Luciana, 'A Tentação Do Silêncio Em Ela Não Sabe Gritar (Ou A Hora Da Estrela), de Clarice Lispector,' *Hispania*, 94.1 (2011), pp. 50–62,
doi:[10.1353/hpn.2011.a424428](https://doi.org/10.1353/hpn.2011.a424428)

Nelson, Maggie, *The Argonauts* (Graywolf Press, 2015)

Newman, Matthew L., and others, 'Gender Differences in Language Use: An Analysis of 14,000 Text Samples,' *Discourse Processes*, 45.3 (2008), pp. 211–36,
doi:[10.1080/01638530802073712](https://doi.org/10.1080/01638530802073712)

Newton, Esther, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*, Phoenix Books (University of Chicago Press, 1979)

Nouzeilles, Gabriela, and Graciela R. Montaldo, eds., *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, and Politics*, The Latin America Readers (Duke University Press, 2002)

Palmeiro, Cecilia, *Desbunde y felicidad: de la Cartonera a Perlongher* (Título, 2011)

Pereira, Maria Marta Laus, 'Aspectos da recepção de Clarice Lispector na França,' *Anuário de Literatura*, 3.3 (1995), pp. 109–25
<<https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/literatura/article/view/5282>>

Perlongher, Néstor, *Evita Vive e Outras Prosas* (Editora Iluminuras Ltda, 2001)

Perlongher, Néstor, *La prostitución masculina* (Urraca, 1993)

Perlongher, Néstor, *Prosa Plebeya: Ensayos, 1980-1992* (Ediciones Colihue SRL, 1997)

Piñeiro, Claudia, *A Little Luck*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Charco Press, 2023)

Piñeiro, Claudia, *Elena Knows*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Charco Press, 2021)

Piñeiro, Claudia, *Time of the Flies*, trans. by Frances Riddle (Charco Press, 2024)

Pohlhaus, Gaile Jr, and Jeanine Weekes Schroer, 'Intersectional Epistemologies: The Ethics and Politics of Epistemic Practice: Special Issue of Hypatia,' *Hypatia*, 38.4 (2023), pp. 665–73, doi:[10.1017/hyp.2024.10](https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2024.10)

Pontiero, Giovanni, *The Translator's Dialogue: Giovanni Pontiero*, ed. by Pilar Orero and Juan C. Sager (John Benjamins Publishing, 1997)

Ponze, Adrián Alberto, 'La Virgen Cabeza: Las Voces de La Villa y de Las Diversidades Sexuales,' *Antares*, 9.17 (2017), pp. 32–49 <<https://hal.science/hal-01782414>>

Preciado, Paul B., *Un Apartamento En Urano: Crónicas Del Cruce* (Anagrama, 2019)

Qiu, Qing, 'A Comparative Study of Novel Translation under Feminist Translation Theory: A Case Study of the Two Chinese Versions of To the Lighthouse,' *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 9.6 (2019), pp. 718–23, doi:[10.17507/tpls.0906.16](https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0906.16)

Quesada-Pacheco, Miguel Angel, and Carla Amorós Negre, 'Percepción lingüística y pluricentrismo: Análisis del binomio a la luz de los resultados del Proyecto Linguistic Identity and Attitudes in Spanish-speaking Latin America (LIAS),' *Estudios de Lingüística. Universidad de Alicante (ELUA)*, 33 (2019), pp. 9–26, doi:[10.14198/ELUA2019.33.1](https://doi.org/10.14198/ELUA2019.33.1)

Quiroga, Marisa, "'Hola Susana" Hizo Olas,' *Archive from La Nación*, 5 May 2008 <<https://web.archive.org/web/20080505211534/http://www.ayudatareas.com.ar/noticias2/8/archivo-g548.shtml>>

Reimóndez, María, 'The Curious Incident of Feminist Translation in Galicia: Courtcases, Lies and Gender-N@tions,' *Galicia21: Journal of Contemporary Galician Studies*, 1 (2009), pp. 68–89

Reimóndez, María, 'We Need to Talk... to Each Other: On Polyphony, Postcolonial Feminism and Translation', in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Emek Ergun and Olga Castro (Routledge, 2017), pp. 42–55, doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624)

Riba Sanmartí, Caterina, 'La Creació D'una Genealogia Femenina Mitjançant La Traducció : Maria-Mercè Marçal I Montserrat Abelló,' *Quaderns: Revista de Traducció*, 22 (2015), pp. 205–15 <<http://hdl.handle.net/10854/4231>>

Rich, Adrienne, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision', *College English*, 34.1 (1972), pp. 18–30, doi:[10.2307/375215](https://doi.org/10.2307/375215)

Rich, Adrienne, *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979-1985* (W.W. Norton, 1986)

Robinson, Douglas, *Transgender, Translation, Translingual Address* (Bloomsbury, 2019)

Rodríguez, Fermín, 'La Virgen Sin Cabeza. Vida, Lenguaje, Territorio', *El Taco en la Brea*, 1.11 (2020), pp. 47–66, art. 11, doi:[10.14409/tb.v1i11.9153](https://doi.org/10.14409/tb.v1i11.9153)

Ruano, María Rosario Martín, 'La Resistencia Al Trasluz: La Traducción Feminista En Examen,' *DeSignis*, 12 (2008), pp. 49–56

Ruiz, Carolina, 'Cuerpos y literatura disidente. La Virgen Cabeza, de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' *Badebec*, 6.12 (2017), pp. 352–65

Russ, Joanna, *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (University of Texas Press, 1983)

Sá, Olga de, 'Clarice Lispector: Processos Criativos,' *Revista Iberoamericana*, 50.126 (1984), pp. 259–80, doi:[10.5195/reviberoamer.1984.3876](https://doi.org/10.5195/reviberoamer.1984.3876)

Sabich, María Agustina, 'Mujeres, madres y modelos: representaciones mediáticas en el living de Susana Giménez,' *Question/Cuestión*, 1.41 (2014), pp. 264–73
<<https://perio.unlp.edu.ar/ojs/index.php/question/article/view/2059>>

Sánchez, Silvina, 'La Fuerza De Juntarnos. La Villa Como Fiesta Queer en La Virgen Cabeza de Gabriela Cabezón Cámara,' *Caracol*, no. 25 (2023), pp. 414–45, doi:[10.11606/issn.2317-9651.i25p414-445](https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2317-9651.i25p414-445)

Sandage, Scott A., *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Harvard University Press, 2005)

Sandoval, Chela, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000)

Santaemilia, José, 'A Corpus-Based Analysis of Terminology in Gender and Translation Research: The Case of Feminist Translation', in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Emek Ergun and Olga Castro (Routledge, 2017), pp. 15–28, doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624)

Santos, Aurielle Gomes dos, and Danielle Dayse Marques de Lima, 'Sobre A Sexualidade Feminina Em Charlotte Brontë e Clarice Lispector,' *Macabéa - Revista Eletrônica do Netlli*, 9.4 (2020), pp. 686–97, doi:[10.47295/mren.v9i4.2543](https://doi.org/10.47295/mren.v9i4.2543)

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide* (Paradigm, 2014)

Saxe, Facundo, 'Acerca del Término Queer y sus Derivas Latinoamericanas: Contra el Relato Norte-Sur y la Supuesta Importación Teórica,' *Revista Belas Infiéis*, 11.2 (2022), pp. 1–17

Schmidt, Simone Pereira, and Ana Gabriela Macedo, 'Feminismos Transnacionais: saberes e estéticas pós/descoloniais,' *Revista Estudos Feministas*, 27 (2019), pp. 1–5, doi:[10.1590/1806-9584-2019v27n158959](https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-9584-2019v27n158959)

Schwartz, H. Andrew, and others, 'Personality, Gender, and Age in the Language of Social Media: The Open-Vocabulary Approach,' *PLoS ONE*, 8.9 (2013), doi:[10.1371/journal.pone.0073791](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0073791)

Scott-Bucleuch, R. L., and Mário Teles de Oliveira, *An Anthology of Brazilian Prose (from the Beginnings to the Present Day)* (Editôra Ática, 1971)

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Gender and Culture (Columbia University Press, 1985)

Serres, Michel, *The Parasite*, trans. by Lawrence R. Schehr (University of Minnesota Press, 2007)

Sharifian, Farzad, ed., *Advances in Cultural Linguistics*, Cultural Linguistics (Springer, 2017), doi:[10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6)

Simon, Herbert A., Karl W. Deutsch, and Martin Shubik, 'Designing Organizations for an Information-Rich World', *Computers, Communications, and the Public Interest*, 1971, pp. 37–72

Simon, Sherry, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, Translation Studies (Routledge, 1996)

Singh, Julietta, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Duke University Press, 2017)

Smith, Ali, 'Art And Death Are Two Things At Once In 'How To Be Both,' 29 November 2014 <<https://www.npr.org/2014/11/29/367362530/art-and-death-are-two-things-at-once-in-how-to-be-both>>

Smith, Ali, 'Costa Novel Award 2014: How to Be Both by Ali Smith,' *The Guardian*, 6 January 2015, section Books <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jan/06/costa-novel-award-2014-how-to-be-both-ali-smith>>

Smith, Ali, *Com ser-ho agora*, trans. by Dolores Udina Abelló (Rayo Verde, 2015)

Smith, Ali, *How to Be Both* (Penguin, 2015)

Solnit, Rebecca, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (Canongate, 2006)

Sontag, Susan, *Styles of Radical Will*, Penguin Modern Classics (Penguin Books, 2009)

Spinelli, Daniela, 'A posição do narrador, Rodrigo S. M., em A Hora da Estrela, de Clarice Lispector,' *FronteiraZ*, *FronteiraZ*, no. 1 (2008), pp. 1–10

Spišiaková, Eva, 'Disability in Translation,' in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Health*, ed. by Şebnem Susam-Saraeva and Eva Spišiaková (Routledge, 2021), pp. 300–13, doi:[10.4324/9781003167983](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003167983)

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?,' in *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, by Rosalind C. Morris (Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 20–54

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006)

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (Routledge, 1993)

Stryker, Susan, '(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies,' in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), pp. 1–17

Tausczik, Yla R., and James W. Pennebaker, 'The Psychological Meaning of Words: LIWC and Computerized Text Analysis Methods,' *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 29.1 (2010), pp. 24–54, doi:[10.1177/0261927X09351676](https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X09351676)

Tissot, Damien, 'Transnational Feminist Solidarities and the Ethics of Translation,' in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Emek Ergun and Olga Castro (Routledge, 2017), pp. 29–41, doi:[10.4324/9781315679624](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679624)

Tozzi, Liliana, 'Representaciones del espacio urbano y configuraciones identitarias en la literatura argentina del siglo XXI,' *Visitae al Patio*, no. 11 (2017), pp. 69–87, doi:[10.32997/2027-0585-vol.0-num.11-2017-1897](https://doi.org/10.32997/2027-0585-vol.0-num.11-2017-1897)

Tymoczko, Maria, 'Translation, Ethics and Ideology in a Violent Globalizing World,' in *Globalization, Political Violence and Translation*, ed. by Esperanza Bielsa and Christopher W. Hughes (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), pp. 171–94, doi:[10.1057/9780230235410_9](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230235410_9)

Vázquez, Olga Castro, 'El género (para)traducido: pugna ideológica en la traducción y paratraducción de O curioso incidente do can á media noite,' *Quaderns: revista de traducció*, 2 October 2009, pp. 251–64
<<https://raco.cat/index.php/QuadernsTraduccio/article/view/139950>> [accessed 18 July 2025]

Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd edn (Taylor & Francis Group, 2018)

Whittle, Stephen, 'Foreword,' in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), pp. xi–xvi

Zimman, Lal, 'Transgender Voices: Insights on Identity, Embodiment, and the Gender of the Voice,' *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 12.8 (2018), doi:[10.1111/lnc3.12284](https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12284)

Žižek, Slavoj, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, The Essential Žižek (Verso, 2008)